



AGENDA ITEM: 5

SUMMARY

Report for:	Licensing Health & Safety Enforcement Committee
Date of meeting:	25 November 2014
PART:	1
If Part II, reason:	

Title of report:	Outcome of consultation on proposed update of standard conditions for animal-related licences
Contact:	Sally Taylor – Lead Licensing Officer, Legal Governance
Purpose of report:	To present to the Committee the results of a recent consultation exercise in respect of proposals to update the standard conditions attached to a number of types of animal welfare licences.
Recommendation	That the Committee approve the adoption of the revised standard conditions for cat boarding establishment licences, dog breeding establishment licences and pet shop licences, as derived from the model conditions published by the CIEH and set out at Annexes 4 - 6 of this report.
Corporate objectives:	Safe and Clean Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a clean and safe environment
Implications:	<u>Value for Money</u> The proposed conditions are taken from national model conditions published by leading regulatory/advisory bodies in consultation with animal welfare and trade organisations. Adopting such standard conditions will improve consistency between licensing authority areas, lowering compliance costs for businesses, and reduce the risk of legal challenge. <u>Financial / Equalities / Risk / Health And Safety Implications</u> No implications are expected to arise.
Consultees:	Holders of animal welfare licences in the borough.
Background papers:	

Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	BCMS – British Cattle Movement Service CIEH – Chartered Institute of Environmental Health DEFRA – Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs DWA – Dangerous wild animal
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1. BACKGROUND

1.1. The Council is responsible for licensing a number of animal-related commercial activities, as well as one non-commercial activity, and in doing so has a responsibility to ensure the welfare of the animals involved in these activities, as well as the safety of the wider public (e.g. ensuring dangerous animals do not escape or attack members of the public).

1.2. The licence types which the Council may issue include:

- a) **Animal boarding establishment licences** (providing accommodation for other people's dogs or cats for a consideration, i.e. kennels, catteries, home boarders or 'dog day-care centres'. Boarding of other animals does not require a licence. Dacorum has historically separated its licences into 'commercial boarding' licences and 'home boarding' licences, and made different provisions for both).
- b) **Dangerous wild animal (DWA) licences** (keeping animals from a prescribed list at domestic premises, including apes, big cats, venomous snakes and arachnids, reptiles, large mammals, etc. Licence-holders may, with the consent of the Council, transport their animals to other areas, e.g. for exhibition or breeding purposes).
- c) **Dog breeding establishment licences** (carrying on a business of breeding dogs for sale (direct or indirect sales both included)).
- d) **Pet shop licences** (any premises used for the commercial sale of pet animals. Also includes sales of offspring which have been bred for sale. Dacorum historically has separated its licences into 'all animal' licences and 'fish only' licences, with differing provisions).
- e) **Riding establishment licences** (premises offering opportunities to ride horses and ponies for a consideration. Includes riding schools where riding training is offered, as well as premises hiring horses to experienced riders. Livery yards, used for stabling other people's horses but not hiring the animals for riding, are excluded from the licensing requirement).
- f) **Zoo licences** (operating an establishment exhibiting wild animals which is open to the public on at least 7 days per year).

1.3. Each of these licensing schemes allows the licensing authority to attach appropriate conditions. For several of these, lists of standard conditions have previously been adopted, and further discretionary conditions can be agreed as required.

1.4. Conditions attaching to DWA and zoo licences are typically species-specific, and as such are determined on a case-by-case basis rather than using a schedule of standard conditions. For many such wild animal species, specific guidance is issued by DEFRA's zoo inspectorate which will be taken into account when compiling conditions

1.5. Herts County Council is responsible for issuing **performing animal licences** (to ensure the welfare of animals used in exhibitions or entertainment performances) and **animal movement orders** (jointly with DEFRA and BCMS, for transporting cattle, pigs, sheep, goats and deer, both to ensure the welfare of the animals and to prevent disease transmission).

1.6. In addition to the legislation which enables the above licence types and makes specific provisions for such businesses, the Animal Welfare Act 2006 establishes an overriding duty for owners and businesses to ensure the welfare of animals in their care, and contains an offence of causing unnecessary suffering to an animal. Parts of the Act, including a provision enabling the

Secretary of State to introduce further or replacement animal licensing schemes by way of regulations, have not to date been utilised.

- 1.7. At the Licensing Health and Safety and Enforcement Committee on 29 April 2014, officers requested approval to commence consultation in respect of proposals to revise and update the Council's standard conditions for animal boarding establishments, pet shops and dog breeding establishments, the aim being to bring them into line with the most current model conditions published by the CIEH in 2013.
- 1.8. Since the Committee meeting on 29 April, the CIEH has advised officers that no updated model conditions for dog boarding are likely to be published until 2015.

2. RESULTS OF CONSULTATION

- 2.1. Consultation was carried out by writing to all current licence holders of animal boarding establishments (including home boarding establishments), pet shops, and the one dog breeding establishment licensed by the Council, explaining the proposals and the reasoning behind them, and providing a set of the appropriate model conditions issued by the CIEH. Responses were invited between 7 August and 18 September 2014, a total consultation period of six weeks.
- 2.2. With regard to conditions for riding establishments, the Council's veterinary surgeon has been consulted, and his response received. The next stage of consultation is due to take place with relevant local businesses to establish whether any further revisions to the standard riding establishment conditions are necessary. Once this is completed, proposals for updating these conditions will be submitted to a future meeting.
- 2.3. During the consultation period three responses were received. Two of these were from the same animal home boarding licence holder, the other from the proprietor and licence holder of a larger animal boarding establishment. Both respondents predominantly board dogs, and their comments refer to a number of outdated or inappropriate conditions currently set out in the existing model conditions for dog boarding, concerns relating to unlicensed home boarding establishments and the need to implement conditions suitable and appropriate for home boarding, and fee levels in comparison to other local authorities. As the CIEH has yet to publish updated model conditions for dog boarding (these are expected sometime in 2015) officers propose to submit a report to a future meeting once these become available, and seek approval to commence consultation on revising our current conditions at that time. The responses are set out at Annexes 1 to 3.
- 2.4. Officers have prepared a set of standard conditions for cat boarding establishments, dog breeding establishments and pet shops, derived from the most recent model conditions published by the CIEH in 2013 and 2014, and these are set out at Annexes 4, 5 and 6.

3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1. That the Committee approve the adoption of the Council's standard conditions for licensing of cat boarding establishments, dog breeding establishments and pet shops derived from the updated 2013 and 2014 model conditions published by the CIEH as set out at Annexes 4 to 6 of the report..

From: Karen Tonge [mailto:]
Sent: 13 August 2014 15:08
To: Licensing Mailbox
Subject: Consultation on revising standard licence conditions for animal welfare licences

Dear Sally,

Thank you for your letter of the 7th August. I am delighted you are looking into these areas, especially for animals welfare and safety. I am hopeful that the new bill coming up in parliament will mean that kittens and puppies are no longer sold in pet stores. I can only hope.

My area of interest is in dog home boarding. My experience of the current criteria list for home boarders is that it is a miss mash and cut and pasted from a kennels establishment criteria, so many areas do not comply. Not many houses have fire doors internally or would want to keep doors shut, a necessary fire risk assessment and protocol for kennels, but not so in domestic set up. Thats only the tip of it. There really needs to be separate Licence conditions written for home boarding. In much the same way that Ofsted looked at nurseries and childminding. They need to be dealt with in a very different way. They are very different services and should be seen as such. Unfortunately because they are not the increase in Home dog sitting is roaring ahead under the radar. As someone who is licenced, has public liability cover, canine fist aid and a qualified dog trainer is pains me when i see others who just post and advertise "Dog loving family will look after your dog etc" The public are not being protected from lack of knowledge. Not many people realise home boarders require them or that they should have public liability either.

Dacorum is worse hit as I have found the reluctance for other local boarders to acquire a licence is mainly the cost and the restrictions of numbers of dogs that can be boarded. This changes when out of Dacorum. St. Albans has many more licensed home boarders as their license is in the region of £40. Bucks are also cheaper and the number of dogs allowed seem more plentiful. There certainly doest seem to be a national - even regional template. I was having this conversation with your Dog Warden at the Paws on Moors afternoon as I was in attendance presenting a Childs dog bite prevention scheme, explaining to her about the rise of adverts on local forums and Face book sites for people offering this service - usually at the same price as me and without any canine qualifications or insurance. It is looked at as easy money for some and of course the dogs can't tell their owners the treatment they received, or conditions they are kept in. I would wholly recommend a regional approach throughout neighbouring Councils and a pricing system that is fair. You may then encourage more people to take up a licence and put proper protocols and insurance in place.

If you would like to discuss this further or be interested in my personal experience or views I would be happy to help.

Yours
Karen Tonge
Assoc of Pet Dog Trainers
Assoc of Pet Professional Guild
Trainer at Karens in the Doghouse
Child Dog Bite Prevention Educator

From: Karen Tonge [mailto:]
Sent: 15 August 2014 10:16
To: Licensing Mailbox
Subject: Re: Consultation on revising standard licence conditions for animal welfare licences

Hi Sally

I have been in communication with a boarding colleague locally who replied as below.

I'm in vale of Aylesbury. I pay £107. I remember I had to pay for a full year even though I only started in may. I find the whole licence thing very bad! I moved from Tring - Dacorum - for the very reason that their licencing rules are prohibitive to making a business out of it - only allowed one dog! I have moved 4 miles down the road and the rules are totally different. I'm on the borders of herts, bucks and beds (literally in the middle of all three) and the rules around kennel cough, entire males etc etc are different which makes it difficult for customers too! I am a bit of a rule follower and the house move was quite a big deal (and expense!) so for me the rules are a bit of a joke. I am licensed for 6 dogs which was granted based on the number of downstairs rooms I have to separate the dogs which makes sense to me. I act responsibly but it is also an opportunity for the not so responsible to get away with bad practice. The licensing officer here was very nice and works part time and pretty sure she has more work than she could do the hours she does! Let me know if you want any more info.

Interestingly in St Albans - a more affluent area they charge £36 for in home boarding The fees are set annually. For the year 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014 the licence fee for an Animal Boarding Establishment is £124 and the licence fee for an Animal Boarding Establishment in a **Private Home is £36.**)

A copy of their licence conditions are below - which are more in keeping with in home care. The parts in bold are two areas I do concern with however.

item 27 - vague on qualifications - not sure what this means.

item 31 - in residence - does this mean on the premises at all times?

I have also copied an application from Barking Mad a franchise boarding company to the Council regarding their concerns. I have highlighted in red areas which still are of concern to some of us.

Thank you.
 Fond regards
 Karen Tonge.

ST ALBANS CITY & DISTRICT COUNCIL LICENCE CONDITIONS
ANIMAL BOARDING ESTABLISHMENTS ACT 1963
WHERE CATS/DOGS ARE BOARDED WITHIN A PRIVATE DWELLING

A licence under the Animals Boarding Establishments Act 1963 is required by any person carrying on at any premises of any nature (including a private dwelling) a business of providing accommodation for other peoples dog(s) or cat(s). These conditions apply to all buildings and areas to which cats and/or dogs have access and/or that are used in association with the boarding of cats and/or dogs. All references to cats and/or dogs apply equally to kittens and/or puppies unless specified otherwise.

1. The licence must be suitably displayed to the public in a prominent position.
2. The premises and accommodation must not be used for the purpose of boarding any livestock that it is not licensed to. Any stray cats or dogs or other livestock must not be permitted or kept in the buildings, areas and accommodation used in association with the boarding of cats and/or dogs. Cats and dogs boarded under the terms of this Licence must live in the home as family pets.
3. The interior and exterior of the premises (including paths, gardens, exercise areas and general surroundings) must be kept in good decorative order and repair so that it is safe, clean and presentable. Adequate ventilation must be provided throughout.
4. Fencing must be maintained in a secure and safe condition.
5. Cats and dogs must at all times be kept in an environment that is suitable to their species and to individuals with respect to security, safety, situation, protection, materials, construction, size, number of occupants, exercising facilities, temperature, lighting, ventilation, cleanliness, accessories and not exposed to damp or draughts. Only chemicals and products that are not toxic to cats or dogs may be used at the premises. Floor areas and bedding must be kept clean, dry and parasite-free.

6. Sleeping areas must be of sufficient size for an adult of the breed occupant to lie down flat on its side, stand up and turn around comfortably. For cats and dogs there must be free access to part of the dwelling maintained at a minimum temperature of 10°C (50°F) and a maximum temperature of 26°C (79°F) at all times. Cats and dogs must be provided with suitable bedding.

7. Cats and dogs must not be kept outside

Page 1 of 5, Licence Conditions 2010 - Boarding Establishments Act (Private Dwelling).doc

8. Cats and dogs must not be kept in such a way that they could be disturbed by other livestock or unauthorised persons. Incompatible species must not be kept within sight of each other. All reasonable precautions must be taken to prevent illegal access to or escape of cats or dogs.

9. The premises, equipment, utensils, accessories, reusable bedding, storage containers, refuse containers and feeding and drinking receptacles must be suitably cleaned and disinfected and dried before and after each use and daily or as often as necessary to maintain them in a clean, safe, sound and hygienic condition. Uneaten food must be disposed of after each meal. Cats must be provided with individual beds and impermeable sanitary trays (with suitable clean litter) at all times.

10. All food, excreta, bedding and waste must be stored in suitable closed, pest and vermin proof, secure and impervious containers, away from direct sunlight, until use or removal from the premises. Waste must be removed from the premises as soon as practicable, at weekly intervals or more frequently where necessary. Suitable and sufficient refrigeration facilities must be provided and used for the storage of fresh or frozen foods which must be adequately defrosted prepared and/or cooked before being fed to cats and dogs. A hygienically constructed and maintained kitchen (connected to mains drainage or approved sewage disposal system) must be employed for the storage and preparation of dog and cat food. A sink with hot and cold water must also be provided for the washing of food, equipment and eating and drinking vessels.

11. All waste must be disposed in accordance with current legislation and to the satisfaction of St Albans District Council in a way that is not likely to cause harm or nuisance. Clinical waste must be segregated, properly stored and disposed of accordingly.

12. A register must be maintained for cats and dogs received. The name, address and telephone number of the owner (or keeper), emergency contact details, name, address and telephone number of the cat or dog's usual veterinary surgeon, name of cat or dog, details of any microchip, tattoo number or other identification, description (colour, breed, age and gender), date of arrival and departure, details of vaccination and any special medication, health, welfare or nutritional requirements of the cat or dog must be specified. Dogs subject to contracts under Dangerous Dogs Legislation are not permitted. This register must be available at all times and kept available for a minimum period of twenty-four months.

13. The maximum numbers of cats and/or dogs licensed to be boarded at the licensed premises are governed by the accommodation and must not be exceeded

Page 2 of 5, Licence Conditions 2010 - Boarding Establishments Act (Private Dwelling).doc

14. Cats and dogs boarded must be in good health and free from injury, disease or parasitic infestation as far as can be reasonably determined without veterinary inspection.

15. A fully stocked first aid kit suitable for use humans and a separate one for use on cats and dogs must be available and accessible on the premises for emergency use by a suitably competent person.

16. Any diseased, sick or injured cats and dogs must receive immediate appropriate care and treatment administered by a suitably qualified and competent person as advised by a veterinary surgeon. To prevent unnecessary suffering care and treatment may include euthanasia in a humane and effective manner administered by an authorised person.

17. Cats and dogs must receive appropriate examination, inoculations and treatment (including worming and other parasite control measures) when and where required for the species or individual and as advised by a veterinary surgeon. An accurate record of all dates, times, treatment given and by who administered must be kept. Veterinary advice must be sought and adhered to whenever necessary, appropriate and in case of any doubt.

18. Vaccination must have been completed at least four weeks before the first date of boarding or in accordance with manufacturers or veterinary instruction.

19. No cat or dog which is suffering from, or could reasonably be suspected of having come into contact with any other livestock suffering from any infectious or contagious disease, or which is infested with parasites, may be brought onto or kept on the premises.

20. All reasonable or necessary precautions must be taken to prevent infestation or access to the premises or accommodation by rodents, insects (including flies) or other pests. Cats, dogs, visitors and customers must be prevented from having access to or suffering from potential harm or injury (including accidental harm or injury) as a direct or indirect consequence of any preventative precautions (ie poisons or traps).

21. Cats and dogs must be supplied with adequate amounts of food, drink and bedding materials, appropriate to their need that is provided in sufficient and suitable receptacles at suitable and regular intervals. Where appropriate or necessary cats and dogs must be groomed according to their individual needs. All food must be suitable for the species and individuals concerned with regards to quantity, quality and nutritional value. Fresh, wholesome drinking water must be available at all times and changed at least daily.

Page 3 of 5, Licence Conditions 2010 - Boarding Establishments Act (Private Dwelling).doc

22. Cats and dogs must be attended to at regular intervals (including at least every four hours between 8am and 6pm) and must be adequately exercised daily appropriate to the species or individual. A record of observations must be maintained showing cleaning, disinfecting, feeding, exercise routines and accommodation temperatures as well as the health and wellbeing of the cats and dogs. Dogs must wear a collar and tag stating the name and address of the owner and the licensee while in a public place and must remain on a suitable lead and be kept under control.

23. No cat or dog shall be directly imported.

24. Cats and dogs must be transported in suitable containers or effectively and suitably restrained and handed to customers in suitable containers or on a suitable lead and must not be transported in a way which causes or is likely to cause injury or unnecessary suffering to the cat or dog. Sufficient and suitable food, drink and bedding must be supplied and cats and dogs must receive adequate care and exercise for their species and individuals.

25. No puppy or kitten may be received unweaned or, if weaned, at an age at which it should not have been weaned unless in exceptional circumstances and when accompanied by its mother.

26. All doors and windows must be escape proof and strong enough to resist impact and scratching, be capable of being effectively secured and opened safely. If bars or frames are used at the premises or for any part of the accommodation they must be of suitable gauge to prevent the occupant from escaping or becoming trapped. Metal or other edges must not present a risk of injury.

27. No cat or dog may be received unless the licensee is familiar with the care, safe handling and welfare of the species and has a recognised qualification or suitable experience. Appropriate reference materials must always be readily available for use.

28. The licensee must provide and display proof of suitable insurance for cats and dogs whilst boarded and public liability.

29. Entrances and exits must be clear of obstructions at all times.

30. Suitable fire fighting equipment (including appropriate extinguishers), smoke detectors and alarms must be provided, maintained, regularly serviced and sited as advised by the local Fire Protection/Prevention Officer and in consultation with St Albans District Council. Precautions must also be taken to prevent any accumulation that may present a risk of fire or other hazard.

Page 4 of 5, Licence Conditions 2010 - Boarding Establishments Act (Private Dwelling).doc

31. The licensee must be resident at the premises at all times whilst cats or dogs are boarded to exercise supervision, deal with emergencies and care for the cats and dogs.

32. The licensee must at all times be within reasonable distance of the premises and be available to visit and have access at all times to the premises containing the cats and dogs in case of emergency (even where the premises is situated within another premises). A reasonable distance would, in normal conditions, be interpreted as no more than 20 minutes travelling time.

33. Registers, records, receipts and other documentation referred to in these licence conditions and/or legally required must be produced on demand by an authorised person. All computer records must be backed up on a daily basis and kept available at all times.

34. Suitable protective clothing, equipment (including a range of muzzles and cat and/or dog catching devices) and COSHH assessments for all substances used must be provided and used.

35. All electrical installations, heating appliances, lighting and other appliances and equipment must be maintained in a safe condition by a suitably qualified person, be of such construction and located so as not to constitute a risk of fire or other hazard which could endanger the health or well-being of the cats or dogs, visitors or customers. Cats and dogs must be prevented from having access to any potential hazard including cabling and open flame heating devices as a result of chewing, scratching etc. If free standing oil appliances are used they must be installed in an area inaccessible to cats and dogs, visitors and customers. Residual current circuit breakers must be installed as a minimum requirement.

36. The licensee and premises must comply with all relevant current legislation (as amended or modified where applicable) including but not exclusively: Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH), Environmental Protection Act 1990, Controlled Waste Regulations 1992, Control of Dogs Order 1992, Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, Welfare of Animals (Transport) Order 1997, Animal Welfare Act 2006.

37. No person other than the licensee is permitted to exercise animals away from the premises and in the event of any animal escaping from the premises, becoming lost while exercising, being injured in any way, being involved in any accident/incident or developing any signs or symptoms of disease/infestation the Animal Warden must immediately be contacted on 01727 819371.

I also found the below from Barking Mad - a franchise for in home boarding that makes interesting reading.

APPLICATION FROM BARKING MAD FOR REDUCTION IN LICENCE FEE FOR HOME BOARDING-(ANIMAL BOARDING ESTABLISHMENTS ACT 1963)

(Contact Deborah Latto Public Protection) (April 2006)

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To consider a request from Barking Mad for a reduction in the Council's fee for Animal Boarding Establishments Licences where the animals are boarded in a home environment.

IMPLICATIONS

Key Policies

All of the Council's Key Policies are relevant.

General Policies

Equal Opportunities

Financial

Currently there is only one home boarding premises licensed within the Borough paying a renewal fee of £160.

RECOMMENDATION

That members:

Endorse the retention of the current fees for the grant and renewal of an Animal Boarding Establishment licence; or Agree a new fee applicable to Home Boarding Establishments.

BACKGROUND

1. The Animal Boarding Establishments Act 1963 requires that any person wishing to keep a boarding establishment for animals must first obtain a licence to do so from the local authority in which the premises used for boarding is located. Any such licence issued lasts for one year.

2. The Animal Boarding Establishments Act 1963 Section 5(1) states 'References in this Act to the keeping of a boarding establishment for animals shall, subject to the following provisions of this section, be construed as references to the carrying on by him at premises of any nature (including a private dwelling) of a business of providing accommodation for other people's animals:

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Provided that:

(a) A person shall not be deemed to keep a boarding establishment for animals by reason only of his providing accommodation for other people's animals in connection with a business of which the provision of such accommodation is not the main activity; and

(b) Nothing in this Act shall apply to the keeping of an animal at any premises in pursuance of a requirement imposed under, or having effect by virtue of Animal Health Act 1981.

3. In May 2006 the Council adopted licence conditions for establishments offering

Home Boarding (Appendix A)

4. The Act further states that where a licence granted it shall be “on the payment of such fee as may be determined by the local authority”. The current fee in Dacorum is £320 for a new grant and renewal fee of £160.

5. Officers have carried out a brief survey of surrounding authorities and the fees they currently charge. The fee charged varies considerably between authorities with Dacorum currently being the dearest of those surveyed. LACORS suggest that local authorities consider offering a discounted licence fee for businesses run on a small scale.

Dacorum - Initial £320 Renewal £160

Watford - Initial £280 Renewal £112.

Welwyn & Hatfield - £212 annual fee

St Albans Kennels - £124 annual fee. Home Boarding £36 annual fee.

Hertsmere - £47 annual fee for domestic . (commercial is £190.00)

Aylesbury Vale - £89 annual fee

6. The Council currently has 7 premises licensed as Animal Boarding Establishments only one of these is a Home Boarding Establishment.

7. Application has been made by Barking Mad for a reduction in the fee charged by the Council.(Appendix B) In support of their request Barking Mad, state “As host families are not running the business they could not be expected, and indeed nor could they afford to pay for a licence, this is covered by Barking Mad.

Fixing the cost of a home boarding licence too high will inevitably deter home boarding across the Dacorum Borough. Increasing our prices to cover the cost of the service would make it prohibitively expensive for the general public, thus forcing dog owners unwilling to use kennels to rely on family and friends who are neither insured nor supported during the pets stay.”

8. In Dacorum the current fees are set to cover the costs reasonably incurred this includes the cost of administration and routine monitoring/enforcement of the licensing process. In their request Barking Mad state that “licenses are usually sent out in subsequent years without the necessity to re-inspect.” This is not the case in Dacorum all premises are inspected before a licence is renewed.

9. There are two counter-suggestions regarding the scale of fee in respect of Home Boarding Establishments:

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(a) As the number of dogs boarded at a Home Boarding premises is small, the risks at each premise and the time required to carry out an inspection is lower and could therefore attract a lower fee than a larger premises. In order to address this some authorities have adopted a scale of fees based on the number of dogs a premises is licensed to accommodate.

(b) Conversely the administrative costs to issue a Home Boarding licence do not vary greatly from a traditional kennels, Apart from the time taken to carry out an inspection of the premises the other costs involved in carrying out routine monitoring/enforcement of a Home Boarding premises do not vary greatly from a the traditional kennels.

10. The applicant requests that licenses be issued for 12 months from the date of inspection. The legislation states that “Any such licence shall (according to the applicant’s requirements) relate to the year in which it is granted or to the next following year. In the former case, the licence shall come into force at the beginning of the day on which it is granted, and in the latter case it shall come into force at the beginning of the next following year. “The effect of this section is that all licenses issued under the Act expire on 31st December of each year and it is not therefore possible in the majority of cases to grant a licence for a period of 12 months from the date of inspection.

11. The applicant has been advised of the time and date of the meeting.

Hazel Corner Dog Hotel
Windmill Road
Markyate
St. Albans, AL3 8LP

17th September 2014

Sally Taylor
Lead Licensing Officer
Dacorum Borough Council
Civic Centre, Marlowes
Hemel Hempstead
Herts, HP1 1HH

Dear Sally,

**Consultation on Revising and Updating the Standard Licence Conditions for Animal Welfare Licenses:
Animal Boarding (Dogs)**

My responses to the Model Licence Conditions and Guidance for Dog Boarding Establishments are attached.

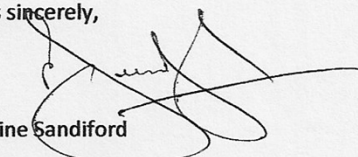
I have owned Hazel Corner Dog Hotel for over twenty years. I have been a main board member of the Pet Care Trust (now The Pet Industry Federation) and for many years a member of their Kennels and Catteries Committee. A new organization (not associated with PIF) has recently been formed, the "Licensed Kennels and Catteries Association", with the aim of better representing our "industry".

I employ four members of staff with additional staff for the peak weekend and holiday periods. I estimate that in my time at Hazel Corner I have paid wages close to one million pounds benefiting the local economy. A few years ago I invested in excess of £200,000 on a new building for guest accommodation with cavity walls, under-floor gas central heating, double glazing and insulated roof.

Why do I mention the above? My feedback should be seen in the context from someone who has significant long term expertise and who maintains the highest standards of animal welfare. My concern, as with all licensed boarding facilities, is the threat to our livelihoods from unlicensed and unregulated "home boarders". These typically are never inspected, do not meet the same standards, and can only offer lower prices by not paying business rates, waste disposal fees, insurance, income tax etc.

If The Model Licence Conditions are to be effective they must be applied universally to any and all animal boarding establishments. A quick search on the Internet, or in local shop window adverts, will soon reveal all the unlicensed operators in any area.

Your sincerely,


Christine Sandiford

Background

It is my understanding that the Model Licence Conditions are some thirty years old and as such are generally outdated. There have been many advances in veterinary medicine, materials for construction, expected welfare standards and customer service expectations since they were first drafted. There are also many more "operators" with the rapid growth of commercial home boarders and pet sitters.

3. CONSTRUCTION

3.4 (Ceilings)

All ceilings are capable of being cleaned and disinfected so how to interpret the addition of "easily"?

We have a modern purpose built block only five years old with very high ceilings and plenty of natural light. A much greater distance than normal from typical dust and dirt areas so it stays much cleaner but as a result is not so "easy" to reach.

4. NUMBERS OF ANIMALS

4.12. (Sharing)

Why should an owner of more than one dog have to provide "the written consent of the dogs' owner" for their dogs to share a kennel? This is at best an administrative burden for all involved and at worst a PR disaster for kennel owners whose clients naturally expect this. Customers will ask "why" and wonder at the motive. Many customers just prior to setting off on holiday are short on time and would strongly object to such an unnecessary admin burden.

4.2.2 (Bedding)

To specify that "suitable bedding equipment must be provided which allows the dog to be comfortable and which is capable of being easily and adequately cleaned and sanitized" is logical but makes no provision for the use of disposable bedding which is even more efficient in this respect. We purchase and use shredded tissue paper that is specifically designed for animal bedding but which can be easily disposed of when soiled and is biodegradable.

Notes on Page 9 (Identification)

For Identification and Control of Dogs on Site it should be noted that animal boarding facilities are not "a public area". Entrance in to the animal boarding area is by invitation only to existing or prospective customers. It is not a safe practice to "have the collar and tag secured immediately outside the kennel." Many operators / staff would interpret this as best achieved by looping the collar through the wire mesh and this could result in dogs feet / legs being caught or trapped with a high risk of injury. This applies also "in the case of sharing"

Best practice from experience is to ensure that each room has the capability to display clearly the dogs name and breed for identification purposes on site. Removing and fitting collars on site poses a hazard to staff as dogs typically get very excitable when shown their collar. If for safety reasons they need to be taken off this should be done by the owner in the reception area.

(Note: We would not have the owners name on display in the kennels for confidentiality and security reasons. This would flag when owners are away and their homes are empty.)

Notes on Page 10 (Communal Areas)

Discouraging communal areas and stating that *"the extra provision of a communal area need not be provided"* is a backward step. Most dogs respond well to a larger area to play and romp in especially if they are longer term boarders. Additionally many dogs prefer to exercise or urinate / defecate on grass. There is little risk of spreading disease if high standards of cleanliness are maintained.

5. MANAGEMENT

5.2.2 and Notes Pages 11 / 12 (Temperature)

It is not possible to maintain a temperature of *"at least 10 °C"* at all times. During the day with "pop holes" and doors open whilst cleaning the external and internal temperature can be below this level. Many dogs will not notice whilst they are running around. Indeed certain breeds especially of the husky variety welcome cooler conditions. I would agree however that there should be a minimum temperature established overnight when dogs are less active, should be sleeping, and the kennel block is closed.

It is accurate to state that *"summer temperatures will naturally exceed 26 °C"* and here there should be a stipulation that additional forced ventilation should be provided. We use large portable fans.

Notes Page 13 (Bedding)

This is outdated in its reference to baskets and bedding. However there is no logical reason why owners own bedding *"should be discouraged"* and indeed quite the reverse. Most dogs will settle better into a new or different environment with something familiar from home. This is especially true of smaller breeds and older dogs. The kennel operator does have *"control over cleanliness and parasites"* as items can always be cleaned or in extreme cases discarded. Gaining prior permission from the owner should this be needed is also straight forward with good customer relations.

Notes Page 13 (Food)

Most complete / dry foods can be left down for a period before needing to be discarded. However what is defined as *"excessive"* as this is very subjective and open to wide interpretation. Some dogs are "grazers" and used to having food available at all times as they would at home.

"Disposable eating dishes, although expensive are recommended" is ridiculous in the extreme. The materials must be flimsy and probably not bio-degradable. Most dogs would chew, damage or eat such items with a serious risk of stomach disorders. Dishes that can be readily cleaned with the use of very hot water (such as stainless steel) are more hygienic, safe and economical in the longer term.

5.6.2 (Vaccinations)

To state in general terms that *"the course of vaccination must have been completed at least four weeks before the first date of boarding"* is outdated. Most vaccinations are annual boosters where dogs already have existing protection. There is a constant technical debate about older dogs only needing to be vaccinated every two years due to the immunity build up they have.

Notes on Page 14 (Kennel Cough)

It should be MANDATORY that the kennel cough vaccination is done four weeks in advance. Reading the manufacturers technical guidance and Material Safety Data Sheets will highlight why this is required for both operator / staff and animal welfare reasons.

The issue is not one of *"giving solid protection after only 5 days"* but dogs transmitting the infection when in close proximity to other dogs – whether in the park or in a boarding establishment. The KC vaccine is a *"live"* one and as such can be shed by the dog that has been vaccinated and can infect other dogs that are not vaccinated. Since we introduced a strict minimum four week policy from KC vaccination prior to boarding we have had virtually no cases of kennel cough.

We encourage customers to have their dogs vaccinated against kennel cough but we do not make it mandatory. Whilst it should be encouraged it should not be mandated as some dogs may be allergic or not be able to have the vaccine for other health reasons.

It should be further noted that there are at least five vaccines available from different manufacturers. There is a risk of *"cross contamination"* and not all are effective against all strains of canine influenza (which is the same as with human vaccines for flu). There is also a risk to operators or staff that may be pregnant from the shedding of the live vaccine. This is a key HS&E reason why dogs just recently vaccinated should not be admitted to boarding establishments.

Notes on Page 14 (Disease Control)

This was written back in the days when Hardpad was a major concern and there was probably not a vaccination for Parvovirus. Today the key controls should be high standards of cleanliness / hygiene and the availability of isolation units for immediate segregation from other boarders. However after this first action a veterinary physician must be called to give expert opinion on the dogs condition. If an infectious disease is confirmed the dog should be moved to a veterinary hospital for expert care.

Notes on Page 14 (Parasites)

Operators and staff cannot be expected to treat dogs with an insecticide. Whilst bathing in a flea shampoo is often possible any other parasitic invasion requires a veterinary examination and expert advice. Some dogs can have adverse skin reactions to *"spot on"* and ingestible treatments. There are many different types and operators and staff will have no knowledge as to what has already been used. All the proprietary treatments can be purchased over the Internet and administered by the dogs owners. There is a serious risk of overdosing without detailed information on previous treatments.

5.6.4 (First Aid)

Having staff trained in animal first aid should be recommended as spotting the early signs of any illness or injury is the most critical factor. However what is a *"well stocked first aid kit suitable for use on dogs"*? Minor cuts can be dealt with by a normal first aid kit if the dog is placid and anything else requires a veterinary examination.

5.6.5 (Muzzles and Catching Device)

If a dog is dangerous enough to require a muzzle for health and safety reasons staff cannot be expected to fit one. We used to have a dog catching device but in over twenty years have never needed one.

Notes on Page 15 (Death)

In such cases the owners veterinary surgeon is always informed and arrangements made for the dog to be collected or taken to the surgery. Whilst we may give our opinion when informing the owner or their contact we would always wish for their vet to give independent expert opinion on the cause of death. The owner can then also request a post mortem examination for verification should they so wish. It is a sensitive time for all involved. However we have never notified the licensing officer. We would assume if there were any general animal welfare concerns the vet as the subject matter expert would notify the applicable authorities.

Notes on Page 15 (Veterinary Surgeon)

We display the name and telephone number but not the address. It should be noted that most veterinary surgeons rely upon veterinary hospitals some distance from their own facilities for emergencies outside normal hours.

5.8.1 (Register)

Typically owners do not know the dogs microchip number and never have it readily to hand when registering a dog for boarding for the first time. Whilst we always request details for a contact person the advent of the mobile phone means that most owners give this as a contact number.

5.10.1 (Supervision)

With new EU working time directives this is no longer practicable. In the evenings when the kennel buildings are closed this should not be mandated. What denotes a "*fit and proper person*" and what experience or qualifications should they have?

The key concern is any outbreak of fire after the buildings are closed and fire alarms and CCTV are key management tools in this respect.

Notes Page 16 (Fire Precautions)

It is outdated to think that the police and fire authorities want plans and details of the buildings. As long as the premises have been inspected by the local fire brigade that should suffice. It should be further noted that such inspections are now no longer routine and have to be specifically requested.

6. DOG SITTING SERVICES

Home Boarders / Dog Sitting Services are today the MAJORITY of the market and are unregulated, unlicensed and are not inspected. They have grown rapidly by offering low prices and the appeal of the dog sitting on an armchair in the comfort of another home. This is the vision sold.

The reality is very different of course. Vaccinations are not checked, temperament is not assessed, dogs come freely in large numbers in confined spaces, fights regularly break out, cleaning standards are poor, infection and disease can be readily spread, expertise on animal boarding, husbandry and welfare is limited to say the least. Some dogs are confined to cages or left in garden sheds for hours on end. There is no one in attendance when the dogs are left alone when the "operator" goes shopping or to collect their children from school.

Nothing illustrates this unregulated sector of the "industry" better than a recent episode of the ITV program "Paul O'Grady For the Love of Dogs" where a dog was reunited with its owners after two years. They had booked a home boarder and paid by phone, the dog had been collected by van, and when they returned from holiday no response from the original phone number. They had no address so had simply lost contact and lost their dog.

My understanding is that the latest animal welfare regulations require a duty of care from dog owners. This would require them to inspect the premises, and welfare standards, of anyone who looks after their dog in their absence. It is standard practice for licensed boarding facilities to willingly undertake "guided tours" for prospective new customers but this is rarely the case with home boarders.

Home boarders do not pay business rates or animal waste disposal fees to local authorities. In the majority of cases they do not have planning permission to operate a business from home nor do they declare their income for tax purposes. They do not inform their house insurers so are in effect operating on an uninsured basis. Whilst franchise operators may declare their approved homes are "police vetted" (?) the reality is the majority of such operations exist outside any governance whatsoever.

Licensed kennel operators are not afraid of competition provided it is a fair, just and level playing field for all.

Christine Sandiford, Proprietor
Hazel Corner Dog Hotel
17th September 2014