



## AGENDA ITEM: 6

Report for:	Licensing and Health & Safety Enforcement Committee
Date of meeting:	4 November 2024
PART:	I
If Part II, reason:	

Title of report:	<b>Gambling Act 2005 – Review of Animal Activity Licensing Policy – Outcome of public consultation</b>
Contact:	Sally McDonald – Licensing Manager
Purpose of report:	To present the outcome of the consultation exercise taken in respect of the revisions to the Council's Animal Activity Licensing Policy
Recommendations	That the Committee consider the responses received, and agree the final reviewed Policy.
Corporate objectives:	A clean, safe and enjoyable environment – This policy sets out the principles for licensing activities involving animals, in line with current legislation, which will ensure the legal and safe operation of licensed businesses
Implications:	<u>Financial / Value for Money / Risk / Health &amp; Safety</u> Having a policy is not a requirement for this area of licensing, and maintaining a policy requires occasional officer resources. However, the purpose of the policy is to ensure that the Council's approach to this licensing regime is clear and transparent, which should reduce unnecessary customer contact, by signposting to the policy which will be available on the Council's website.
Consultees:	Direct consultation was carried out with all licence holders, the Animal Welfare Team at Dacorum Borough Council, and the public via the Dacorum Borough Council website.
Background papers:	
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	

## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. At the meeting of the Licensing Committee on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2024, Members agreed that the draft revisions to the Dacorum Borough Council Licensing Policy be put out for consultation for a period of six weeks.
- 1.2. Consultation took place between 11<sup>th</sup> September and 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2024. This report is to advise Members of the outcome of the consultation and finalise the policy based on the responses.
- 1.3. Consultation responses are set out at Annexes A1 to A6.
- 1.4. The draft Animal Activity Licensing Policy is set out at Annex B.

## 2. CONSULTATION

- 2.1. 6 responses were received during the consultation period, and the issues raised are set out below.

### Issues/questions arising from consultation

- Increasing numbers of dogs purchased during Covid means customers are desperate and do not care about the stars, making a mockery of the whole system.

Answer: As this is DEFRA led legislation, achieving a star rating is part and parcel of the process to try and ensure the best possible standards of welfare are maintained. Unfortunately the situation with Covid and the resulting number of dogs requiring care is something the local authority has no control over.

- The star ratings do not reflect the quality of the establishment.

Answer: Star ratings are awarded relating to a risk score of the premises, i.e if there have been complaints or non-compliance during the period of the licence, and whether the premises meets the higher standards set out in legislation, or not. Our website advises that a lower star rating does not necessarily mean the premises is bad, or non-compliant, and that customers should visit a premises and form their own opinions prior to booking. Ultimately though, the Council must follow the process as set out in legislation and guidance.

- Concerns about the reference to 'initial' fees and giving notice to visit.

Answer: The fees for animal licences are split into two parts, the initial 'application' fee, which covers the processing of the application, and the inspection, and the mid-term inspection. To reassure, 24 hours notice are always given for domestic premises, in line with statutory guidance.

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1. That the Licensing Committee consider the consultation responses, and agree any further amendments.
- 3.2. That the draft revised Animal Activity Licensing Policy be agreed.

**What are your views on the revisions to Dacorum's Animal Activity Licensing Policy?**

Sadly due to Covid and everyone getting a dog, and the fact that there is a shortage of kennels nationally, which the new licensing was a factor in kennels closing their doors, rather than spending money to adhere to the licence. The star rating seems to mean nothing, people are so desperate to find a kennel, so they can go on holiday, most don't even know what star rating you are. Which after putting the effort in and spending money to get my 5 stars I feel it makes a complete mockery of the system. And a complete waste of my time putting the extras in to get my five stars. We have had many people ring from all over the place just trying to find a kennel some say to me they've tried five or six other kennels in desperation. They haven't looked at my star rating at all, They're just desperate to get a kennel.

Annex A2

**What are your views on the revisions to Dacorum's Animal Activity Licensing Policy?**

none as out of my control

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Annex A3

**What are your views on the revisions to Dacorum's Animal Activity Licensing Policy?**

I do not have any view on the revisions. But I do have reservations still on Star Ratings. Just because a premises may tick all DEFRA Boxes does not mean they are a top Boarder or Pet Carer. They just meet the Criteria set out, it's not rated on Customer Satisfaction so the Star Ratings are totally misleading. There are some terrible 5 star establishments out there but because they have a number of or there are 2 or 3 personnel makes them 5 star. And there are some excellent 3 star Boarders but if people look on your Website and the List the 3 star boarders through no fault of their own get ignored because of a misleading star rating system

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Annex A4

**What are your views on the revisions to Dacorum's Animal Activity Licensing Policy?**

One concern. 1.25 the application fee, the addition of 'initial' with regard to inspections. Are you looking at introducing a further fee for mid-term inspections as the cost of the licensing process in Dacorum is already a lot higher than other councils. 2.1.4 makes note of an 'unannounced inspection'. This is not acceptable in a private home dwelling, more for commercial daycare. 24hrs minimum notice should be given.

**Annex A5**

**What are your views on the revisions to Dacorum's Animal Activity Licensing Policy?**

Don't have any

**Annex A6**

**What are your views on the revisions to Dacorum's Animal Activity Licensing Policy?**

If it encourages more individuals and businesses to get the required license I'm all for it

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