

Equality Analysis

Equality Analysis Summary

Name of proposal, policy, service function, or restructure requiring an Equality Analysis	Stray Dog Service Procurement						
Brief summary of your proposal	<p>This Council has a statutory duty to provide a stray dog service. The service was previously provided by the animal warden, a kennelling service, and an out of hours acceptance point by a local veterinary practice.</p> <p>The Acceptance Point is no longer available so it is proposed to provide the stray dog service during the main hours of demand as measured over a 3-year period. This changes the service from a 24/7 service to a 7-day service between the hours of 8.30am and 10pm. This in line with neighbouring authorities.</p>						
Department	Environment and Place						
Service Area	Regulatory Services						
Date Equality Analysis Begun:	12 December 2023						
At what stage of the proposal is this Equality Analysis being conducted?	<table> <tr> <td>Planning Phase</td> <td>N</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Midway Point</td> <td>N</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Reflective Analysis</td> <td>Y</td> </tr> </table>	Planning Phase	N	Midway Point	N	Reflective Analysis	Y
Planning Phase	N						
Midway Point	N						
Reflective Analysis	Y						

Names and roles of staff carrying out this Equality Analysis:

Name	Role	Service Area
Elizabeth Georgeou	Head of Regulatory Services	Regulatory Services
Valerie Howells	Animal Warden	Regulatory Services
Sheira Fox	Regulatory Services Manager	Regulatory Services

1. Evidence

1.1 Sources of information

Table 1

Source of information	Reason for using (e.g., likely impact on a particular group).
UK Pet Population UK Pet Food accessed 12/12/2023 9.05am	This survey indicates that 31% of households in 2023 may have a dog.
2021 Census Profile for areas in England and Wales - Nomis (nomisweb.co.uk)	Number of households in Southend as at 2021 Census was 78,344.
RSPCA Good Practice Guide	Policy considerations

1.2 Gaps in information or data

Are there any information gaps and data?

No

Do the gaps relate to any protected characteristics?

The stray dog service is a statutory duty which the local authority must provide. The local authority will seize and detain stray dogs, including those dogs which are found by residents, and try to reconnect the owners with the dogs through identifying data on the dogs.

Where the authority does seize and detain a dog, the legislation prescribes a statutory fee that must be paid by owners of dogs and also allows for the local authority to recover additional costs. The additional costs include the collection and kenneling costs, and any associated veterinary charges that may apply.

Where the owner has complied with the legal requirements to identify their dog the dogs can be reunited with the owners very quickly, this reduces the costs that will be incurred by the local authority, and thus charged to the owner. Where the local authority is unable to trace the owner, because ownership details are not available this may extend the time that that the dog is held, and this increases the charges that will be incurred. There is a statutory 7-day period that the local authority has responsibility for the dog, and where an owner is notified, this commences 7-days from that notification.

No

2. Analysis: How people with protected characteristics will be impacted by your proposal

2.1 Impact assessment

Table 2

	Impact - Please tick				
	Yes			Not Impacted	Impact Unclear
	Positive	Negative	Neutral		
Age (including looked after children)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marriage and civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy and maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Religion or belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Carers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Socio-economic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Armed Forces Service Personnel & Veterans	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Care Experience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2.2 Results of your analysis

Table 3

	Potential Impact
Overarching comments	The RSPCA cites research that demonstrates the positive aspects on a community of pet ownership. Indicating that pet ownership can enhance both mental and physical health, through providing companionship and

	<p>encouraging exercise. There are however irresponsible dog owners whose behaviour can cause misery and suffering to the dogs.</p> <p>If individuals comply with the legal requirements for identifying the dog's owner the charges are reduced, because early contact means a lower cost to the owner. This is because the legislation allows the local authority to charge for the costs associated with seizing and detaining stray dogs. The charges applied relate directly to the costs that are incurred by the Council in meeting its statutory obligation with respect to stray dogs.</p> <p>It is estimated that 31% of households, which for Southend would mean 24,286, could potentially own a dog. However, the overall effect on householders would be low as the demand on the service indicates that less than 0.5% of households may have to pay the costs associated with the seizure and detention of their dogs.</p>
Age	None
Disability	Those with a disability may rely on their dog as an assistance dog. Disability dogs are very highly trained, there have been no instances of assistance dogs being left to stray. If the local authority were to seize and detain an assistance dog consideration would be given to the circumstances and the fees chargeable. Evidence of an assistance dog may include registration with a reputable charity such as Guide Dogs for the Blind Association.
Gender reassignment	None
Marriage and civil partnership	None
Pregnancy and maternity	None
Race	None
Religion or belief	None
Sex	None
Sexual orientation	None
Carers	None
Socio-economic	Individuals on a low income may be less able to afford the charges, however compliance with the legal requirement on ownership identification will reduce the impact of this. There is clear guidance on the Council's website on how to check whether the Council has arranged for the collection of a dog, there is also the facility to leave a message which will be answered in office hours. Microchipping is undertaken at a low cost where the dog has not been micro-chipped.
Armed Forces Service Personnel & Veterans	None
Care Experience	None

3. Action: Can we mitigate negative impact?

3.1 Steps taken to mitigate any impact(s)

Table 4

Planned action and the outcome it will achieve	Owner	When	How will this be monitored (e.g., via team/service plans)
There are already steps in place to mitigate impact, in the provision of information on compliance with the legislation on ownership and on information on how to reclaim a stray dog.	Val Howells	Already in place	None required.
To undertake a consultation once the contract is in place to ensure that residents are able to access information on the service provision.	Elizabeth Georgeou	September 2024	Consultation

4. Outcome: What difference has your Equality Analysis made?

4.1 Outcome

Please choose the most relevant option:

- No change – the assessment is that the policy/practice/service is/will be robust.
- Adjust the policy/ practice proposal – this involves taking steps to remove any barriers, to better advance equality and/or to foster good relations.
- Continue the policy/ practice proposal despite the potential for adverse impact, and which can be mitigated/or justified
- Stop the policy/ practice proposal as adverse effects cannot be mitigated or justified.

4.2 Justification

The adverse potential adverse impact on socio-economic groups is mitigated through the provision of clear guidance on the Council's web pages. Where individuals do not comply with the legislation relating to ownership details they may incur additional charges. This is proportionate and legitimate in managing resources, and charges that are made to local authority.

Your Head of Service or Director is required to sign-off your analysis and outcome

Advice is already provided to assist residents to understand the stray dog service and the charges that are applied. This includes how to access the service and find a stray dog if it has been seized and detained by the Council. The accessibility of this information will be tested through a consultation which will commence after the service has been in place for 6 months to measure its efficacy.



Signed (lead officer):



Signed (Executive/Director/Head of Service)

Once signed, please send a copy of the completed EA to Angela Dress
Angeladress@southend.gov.uk.

All Equality Analyses are recorded on Pentana and reported to CLT and DLT's on a quarterly basis.