

## **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

<b>Name of Policy/Service/Function</b>	Animal Warden, including stray and noisy dogs
<b>Directorate</b>	Environmental Services
<b>Head of Service</b>	Linda Wacey
<b>Names and Roles of the people carrying out the EIA</b>	Mandy Thompson Section Manager (Interim) Response Team
<b>Why is the Equality Impact Assessment being done?</b>	On EIA schedule for retrospective review

### **1. Introduction and Background**

#### 1.1 Summary of proposal and link to six equality groups

The Animal Warden within Environmental Health, Consumer Protection, carries out statutory functions as detailed in the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (EPA) with regard to the collection of dogs allowed to stray on the public highway and EPA s79 for statutory nuisance from barking dogs.

The Animal Warden undertakes to investigate and advise on all matters of animal health and welfare within Waltham Forest including the inspection and licensing of Pet Shops, boarding establishments and riding schools. Low cost microchipping roadshows are carried at regular intervals throughout the year.

It is delivered through a combination of reactive complaint work, planned inspections, information campaigns and community based activities.

An equality impact assessment is being done to identify any negative impact and opportunities for the better promotion of equality

### **2. Profile of groups affected as customers and/or staff**

The client groups affected by this plan are anyone who lives, works or visits Waltham Forest.

This plan potentially affects all of the six equality groups as everybody living /visiting/working within the borough may be affected by noisy animals or encounter a stray dog, and may have cause to make a complaint about it.

### **3. Questions this assessment addresses**

#### **3.1 What kind of equality impact may there be?**

In 2006/2007 there were 641 activities/requests for service from the animal warden, 34 related to incidents concerning stray dogs that were removed to kennels and 162 for animal noise.

Access to information may not be equal across different groups, approx 45% of the population are from different ethnic groups and may not have English as their first language. Current leaflets are not always available in a range of community languages.

### **3.2 How significant is it in terms of its nature and the number of people likely to be affected?**

The impact is not significant as a translation sheet is included with information when appropriate and the Waltham Forest Interpreting service is also used to overcome severe language barriers.

### **3.3 Is the impact positive or negative (or is there a potential for both)?**

There is potential for both

### **3.4 On what aspects of the Equality Duties will this impact be?**

Any enforcement action that is taken will only affect animal owners, before any enforcement action is taken there is an escalating scale with guidance and advice at one end and prosecution at the other. The Response Team follows the principles of the Enforcement Concordat and also the Environmental Services Enforcement Protocol which is available on the Waltham Forest Internet at:

<http://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/index/environment/es-enforcement-protocol.htm>

This document sets out the general approach to enforcement matters including those of dealing with vulnerable groups. When taking formal enforcement action there is a negative impact on the animal owner but this is outweighed by the positive impact on other residents/workers/visitors in Waltham Forest in providing a safer/quieter environment.

### **3.5 Could the impact constitute unlawful discrimination?**

No. As the service is already being used by people from different ethnic groups, and any impact could not constitute unlawful discrimination as they are a statutory duty.

### **3.6 What further information is required to gauge the probability and extent of the impact?**

It would be useful to gauge the probability and extent of the impact and Equality Monitoring Forms could be sent to service users once resolution has been reached.

### **3.7 Where and how can that information be obtained?**

Since 2004, the Animal Warden has run a stall every year at the Consumer Protection Customer panel day to specifically try to access members of the public to inform them of our service. A Customer Panel newsletter is also sent out six times per year.

The Green Fayre and other community days within Waltham Forest – the Animal Warden actively participates in these events every year.

Microchipping Roadshows are regularly held throughout the year in Pet Shops and other local resources to promote responsible pet ownership and to provide low cost access to permanently identifying dogs and other animals reducing the impact of stray animals on Waltham Forest.

#### **4. Action Planning Questions**

##### **4.1 What action do we need to take to reduce negative impact?**

See section 3.2, 3.4, 3.6 & 3.7 above.

##### **4.2 If the action proposed will not fully mitigate adverse consequences for equality, or if the decision is to take no action, why is this, and can we justify it?**

These actions will mitigate the adverse effects of the current service delivery.

##### **4.3 Can any further action be taken to promote equality of opportunity in relation to any of the equality strands?**

Information can also be obtained on the council website, by calling at the office in Blackhorse Road, via e-mail or telephone.

##### **4.4 Do we need to undertake any further consultation or research?**

See 3.6

#### **4. Conclusions and Next Steps**

##### **4.1 The key areas, which were improved as a result of this assessment, were:**

Customer surveys to be carried out in 2007-08.

#### **5. Action Plan**

<b>Action required</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Time Scale</b>	<b>Comments/Outcomes</b>
Customer satisfaction survey including analysis of equalities monitoring information	M. Thompson	By April 08	Dependent upon Business Support personnel availability