**Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council**

**Section 75 Equality and Good Relations Screening**

**Part 1. Information about the activity/policy/project being screened**

# **Name of the activity/policy/project**

Tender for LCCC Out of Hours Dog Warden Service (OOHDWS) commencing 01/01/22 for 1+1+1+1 years.

# This an existing activity which has been undertaken by a contractor for the Council since 2008 to ensure a response to urgent service requests in relation to dog control during evenings, weekends and public holidays. The service responds to reports on stray and lost dogs and dog attacks on people, livestock and other animals. LCCC Enforcement Officers provide a comprehensive Dog Control Service during normal office hours.

This tender is to appoint a contractor to continue to provide an out of hours Dog Warden Service throughout the Council area for a period of 4 years, subject to annual review. The previous contract for this service has recently expired.

The service will operate from 6pm -10pm Monday to Friday and 9am to 10pm on weekends and public holidays.

**What are the intended aims/outcomes the activity/policy/project is trying to achieve?**

Provision of an OOHDWS throughout the Council area aims:

* To ensure that stray and lost dogs are looked after out of hours by impounding with our kennel provider or returning home.
* To ensure attacks by dogs on persons, domestic animals and livestock are responded to out of hours.
* To ensure a consistent approach throughout the Council area to the provision of the OOHDWS.

**Who is the activity/policy/project targeted at and who will benefit? Are there any expected benefits for specific Section 75 categories/groups from this activity/policy/project? If so, please explain.**

The provision of the Out of Hours Dog Warden Service is not targeted at any group. Dog owners will come from all Section 75 groups and the service is intended to provide for people from all groups.

**Who initiated or developed the activity/policy/project?**

Sally Courtney - Environmental Services, Environmental Health

**Who owns and who implements the activity/policy/project?**

LCCC owns the policy

Environmental Health implements

**Are there any factors which could contribute to/detract from the intended aim/outcome of the activity/policy/project?**

Yes

**If yes, are they: financial, legislative, other? Give brief details of any significant factors.**

Historically, there has been little interest from private sector in applying for this tender so we may or may not have interested parties.

The cost of the service is variable each month depending upon number of callouts by members of public.

**Who are the internal and external stakeholders (actual or potential) that the activity/policy/project will impact upon?**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Staff | The Senior Enforcement Officer is responsible for ensuring the day to day operation of the service. |
| Service Users | General public, including dog owners, which includes residents and non-residents |
| Other – please list (eg, Elected Members, delivery partners, contractors, etc) | Kennelling provider - appointed contractor.  DAERA |

**Other policies/strategies/plans with a bearing on this activity/policy/project**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name policy/strategy/plan** | **Who owns or implements?** |
| Dog Control Enforcement Guidelines for officers  For for off | LCCC- Environmental Health |
| HR Policies | LCCC – HR&OD |
| Health & Safety Policy | LCCC – Audit, Risk & Performance |
| LCCC Equality Scheme and associated equality policies | LCCC |
| LCCC Enforcement and Regulation Policy | LCCC |
| LCCC Corporate Plan | LCCC |

**Available evidence**

**What evidence/information (qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered or considered to inform this activity/policy? Specify details for each Section 75 category.**

LCCC has provided an OOHDWS since January 2008 to ensure that there is a response to urgent service requests by residents and dog owners in LCCC area outside office hours and at weekends and public holidays. There are currently 17,122 licensed dogs within the Council area and in 2019 Dog Control Service responded to 1277 service requests. During the same period the OOHDWS responded to 97 requests for service.

The direct employment Out Of Hours Dog Wardens would have to include a minimum of 2 officers at a cost in the region of £5500 per month (annual cost of £66,000), and more depending on the number of hours covered; without considering the management and admin support. The engagement of contracted staff is a cost saving exercise when compared with providing additional Enforcement Officers to carry out this service.

An Out of Hours Service is provided by every Council in NI to varying degrees. The Council could choose not to engage an OOHDWS however this reversal would require Council approval.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Section 75 Category** | **Details of evidence/information** There are currently 17,122 licenced dogs in LCCC and the Dog Control Service receives around 1250 service requests each year. Only a small fraction of these are received out of hours and dealt with by the OOHDWS. These will be mainly for lost or stolen dogs and dog attacks. Section 75 information is not routinely recorded by the dog control service so there is no information of the extent of use by these categories (other than age or disability see below) |
| Religious Belief | No information held |
| Political Opinion | No information held |
| Racial Group | No Information held |
| Age | We are able to identify a number of dog licences held by older people living on their own or where it is their first dog as they are entitled to a reduced fee licence |
| Marital Status | No information held |
| Sexual Orientation | No information held |
| Men & Women Generally | No information held |
| Disability | We hold a limited amount of information insofar as concessionary licenses are available to those people who own assistance dogs. |
| Dependants | No information held. |

### Needs, experiences and priorities

**Taking into account the information referred to above, what are the different needs, experiences and priorities of each of the following categories, in relation to the particular activity/policy/decision? Specify details for each of the Section 75 categories**

The OOHDWS contact details are advertised on the Council Website and on the answer phone at the Dog Control Service Office. The telephone number is also held by the PSNI and by the LVI reception. The Service is obliged to respond to all requests for service within one hour.

The Service has operated successfully this way since its beginning in 2008.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Section 75 Category** | **Details of needs/experiences/priorities** |
| Religious Belief | No different needs identified |
| Political Opinion | No different needs identified |
| Racial Group | People who are new to the district or who may not have English as a first language may not know about Council’s responsibilities around dog licensing, etc. They may also have language issues when trying to contact the Council or the service. |
| Age | Some older people may have issues with accessing information and may not be online |
| Marital Status | No different needs identified |
| Sexual Orientation | No different needs identified |
| Men & Women Generally | No different needs identified |
| Disability | Disabled people need to find information about the service and about dog ownership requirements accessible and user-friendly. Consideration needs to be given to their access to the service. |
| Dependants | No different needs identified |

**Part 2. Screening questions**

**1 What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this activity/policy, for each of the Section 75 equality categories?**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Section 75 Category** | **Details of likely impact – will it be positive or negative? If none anticipated, say none** | **Level of impact -** **major or minor\*** - see guidance below |
| Religious Belief | The provision of an out of hours dog warden service is intended to benefit all citizens. It will not impact differently on different equality groups and should have no impact on equality of opportunity.  Policies relating to dog ownership are applied equally to all and operational protocols ensure that the Warden service is applied equitably. | None |
| Political Opinion |
| Racial Group |
| Age |
| Marital Status |
| Sexual Orientation |
| Men & Women Generally |
| Disability |
| Dependants |

\* See Appendix 1 for details.

**2(a) Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equality categories**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Section 75 Category** | **IF Yes, provide details** | **If No, provide details** |
| Religious Belief |  | None identified – the service is available and applied equally to all |
| Political Opinion |  | None identified – service is available and applied equally to all |
| Racial Group |  | The dog control service regularly uses social media to highlights aspects of the Dog Control Service in pictorial and plain English which can be easily understood. |
| Age |  | None identified in relation to this service |
| Marital Status |  | None identified in relation to this service |
| Sexual Orientation |  | None identified in relation to this service |
| Men & Women Generally |  | None identified in relation to this service |
| Disability |  | The Dog Control Service regularly uses social media to highlights aspects of the Dog Control Service in pictorial and plain English which can be easily understood  Dog Control legislation has provided appropriate exemptions to ensure that this group will not experience issues with compliance. |
| Dependants |  | None identified in relation to this service |

**2(b) DDA Disability Duties (see Disability Action Plan 2021-2025)**

Does this policy/activity present opportunities to contribute to the actions in our Disability Action Plan:

* to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people?

No

* to encourage the participation of disabled people in public life?

No

**3 To what extent is the activity/policy/project likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Good Relations Category** | **Details of likely impact. Will it be positive or negative?** [if no specific impact identified, say none] | **Level of impact –** **minor/major\*** |
| Religious Belief | No impact on good relations identified | None |
| Political Opinion |
| Racial Group |

\*See Appendix 1 for details.

**4 Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Good Relations Category** | **IF Yes, provide details** | **If No, provide details** |
| Religious Belief |  | No opportunities identified in relation to this service. |
| Political Opinion |  |
| Racial Group |  |

**Multiple identity**

**Provide details of any data on the impact of the activity/policy/project on people with multiple identities. Specify relevant Section 75 categories concerned**

We are aware that dog owners and the users of this service will have multiple identities and may identify, for example, as older and disabled, young LGB or minority ethnic and female.

**Part 3. Screening decision**

Equality and good relations screening is used to identify whether there is a need to carry out a full equality impact assessment on a proposed policy or project. There are 3 possible outcomes:

1. **Screen out** - no need for a full equality impact assessment and no mitigations required because no negative impacts identified (or only entirely positive impacts for all groups). This may be the case for a purely technical policy for example.
2. **Screen out with mitigation** - no need for a full equality impact assessment but some minor impacts identified which can easily be mitigated. Most activity will probably fall into this category.
3. **Screen in for full equality impact assessment** – potential for significant (and potentially negative) impact identified for one or more groups so proposal requires a more detailed impact assessment. [see Equality Commission guidance on justifying a screening decision.]

**Choose only one of these** and provide reasons for your decision and ensure evidence is noted/referenced for any decision reached.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Screening Decision/Outcome** | **Reasons/Evidence** |
| Option 1  **Screen out** – no equality impact assessment and no mitigation required [go to Monitoring section] | We have concluded that a full Equality Impact Assessment is not required as no impact on equality of opportunity has been identified for any group. The service is a universal service which is likely to benefit the community generally. |
| Option 2  **Screen out with mitigation** – some potential impacts identified but they can be addressed with appropriate mitigation [complete mitigation section below] |  |
| Option 3  **Screen in** for a full Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)  [If option 3, complete timetabling and prioritising section below] |  |

**Mitigation (Only relevant to Option 2)**

**Can the activity/policy/project plan be amended or an alternative activity/policy introduced to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations?**

If so, give the **reasons** to support your decision, together with the proposed changes/amendments or alternative activity/policy and ensure the mitigations are included in a revised/updated policy or plan.]

**Timetabling and prioritising for EQIA (only relevant to Option 3) - Not applicable**

Factors to be considered in timetabling and prioritising activities/policies for equality impact assessment.

If the activity/policy has been **‘screened in’** for equality impact assessment, then please answer the following questions to determine its priority for timetabling the equality impact assessment.

On a scale of 1-3, with 1 being the lowest priority and 3 being the highest, assess the activity/policy in terms of its priority for equality impact assessment.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Priority criterion | Rating (1-3) |
|  |  |
| Effect on equality of opportunity and good relations |  |
| Social need |  |
| Effect on people’s daily lives |  |
| Relevance to a public authority’s functions |  |
|  |  |
| Total Rating Score | ?? |

**Is the activity/policy affected by timetables established by other relevant public authorities? Yes/No**

If yes, please provide details

**Part 4. Monitoring**

**Two elements to monitoring:**

1. **Monitoring the activity generally as part of normal review and evaluation or service improvement and 2) monitoring by equality category.**

Public authorities should consider the guidance contained in the Commission’s Monitoring Guidance for Use by Public Authorities (July 2007).

The Commission recommends that where the activity/policy has been amended or an alternative policy introduced, the public authority should monitor more broadly than for adverse impact (See Benefits, P.9-10, paras 2.13 – 2.20 of the Monitoring Guidance).

Effective monitoring will help the public authority identify any future adverse impact arising from the activity/policy which may lead the public authority to conduct an equality impact assessment, as well as help with future planning and activity/policy development.

Who will undertake and sign-off the monitoring of this activity/policy and on what frequency? What will be monitored and how? What specific equality monitoring will be done?

Please give details below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Will be undertaken by:  Name & Position/Job Title: | Frequency : annually  Joanne MacAskill, Senior Enforcement Officer |
|  | Current monitoring of supplier performance, service requests (logged on tascomi), outcomes of investigations and satisfaction is ongoing. |
| Will be signed-off by: | Sally Courtney |
| Name & HoS Title: | Richard Harvey, Head of Environmental Health |

**Part 5 - Approval and authorisation**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Screened by:** | **Position/Job Title** | **Date** |
| Sally Courtney | Environmental Health Manager | 09/11/2021 |
|  |  |  |
| Reviewed by | Equality Officer | 15/11/2021 |
| **Approved by:** |  |  |
| Richard Harvey | Head of Service (Environmental Health) | 25/11/2021 |

Note: On completion of the screening exercise, a copy of the completed Screening Report should be:

* ‘signed off’ and approved by a senior manager responsible for the activity/policy
* sent to the Equality Officer for the quarterly screening report to consultees and internal reporting
* published on the LCCC website accompanied by a copy of the policy/project/plan being screened
* made available to the public on request.

Evidence referenced in the screening report should also be available if requested.

Appendix 1 – Equality Commission guidance on equality impact

\*Major impact:

1. The policy/project is significant in terms of its strategic importance;
2. Potential equality matters are unknown, because, for example, there is insufficient data upon which to make an assessment or because they are complex, and it would be appropriate to conduct an equality impact assessment in order to better assess them;
3. Potential equality and/or good relations impacts are likely to be adverse or are likely to be experienced disproportionately by groups of people including those who are marginalised or disadvantaged;
4. Further assessment offers a valuable way to examine the evidence and develop recommendations in respect of a policy about which there are concerns amongst affected individuals and representative groups, for example in respect of multiple identities;
5. The policy is likely to be challenged by way of judicial review;
6. The policy is significant in terms of expenditure.

Minor impact

1. The policy is not unlawfully discriminatory and any residual potential impacts on people are judged to be negligible;
2. The policy, or certain proposals within it, are potentially unlawfully discriminatory, but this possibility can readily and easily be eliminated by making appropriate changes to the policy or by adopting appropriate mitigating measures;
3. Any asymmetrical equality impacts caused by the policy are intentional because they are specifically designed to promote equality of opportunity for particular groups of disadvantaged people;
4. By amending the policy there are better opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

No impact (none)

1. The policy has no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations;
2. The policy is purely technical in nature and will have no bearing in terms of its likely impact on equality of opportunity or good relations for people within the equality and good relations categories.