

Meeting:	LICENSING AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
Date:	7 th March 2005
Subject:	Licensing of Catteries – Adoption of Model Standards
Responsible Chief Officer:	Chief Environmental Health Officer
Contact Officer:	Andy Appleby, Environmental Health Manager, Ext 2375
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Philip O'Dell
Status:	Part 1.
Ward:	Whole Borough
Key Decision:	No

1.0 **Section 1: Summary**

1.1 **Decision Required**

- a. To adopt the Model Licence Conditions for cat boarding establishments produced by the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health dated 1995 from the 1st March 2005 and to apply this standard to all new and existing catteries.
- b. That the two catteries that do not meet the space requirements in the standard are exempted from meeting the space standards provided that all of the following conditions continue to be met:
 - i. That the existing space standards and standards of care are maintained.
 - ii. That the existing licensee remains as owner and operator of the cattery.
 - iii. That the space standards in paragraph 'a' above will apply if the cages accommodating cats are changed, added to, extended or rebuilt. The

new space standards would not apply merely following the repair and maintenance of the existing cages.

iv. That the catteries meet the requirements of the standards in paragraph 'a' in all other respects.

1.2 **Reason for report**

a. This report proposes that the authority adopts the current guidance produced by the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) to facilitate the Licensing of Cat Boarding Establishments.

1.3 **Benefits**

a. To ensure the maintenance of minimum standards in Licensed premises to ensure consumer protection, the welfare of the animals and to minimise the spread of disease.

1.4 **Cost of Proposals**

a. There is no cost attached to the proposals as implementation will be undertaken within the existing staff resource. The report recommends that the two businesses who do not meet the requirements at present can maintain their existing facilities while owned and operated by the current licensee to ensure there will be no adverse cost burden.

1.5 **Risks**

a. If the standard is not adopted the Council will be obliged to continue to License the establishments although they do not meet the standards and may be subject to challenge if the licensed conditions resulted in consumer complaint.

1.6 **Implications if recommendations rejected**

a. The Council will not be in a position to meet its statutory obligation to ensure the maintenance of minimum standards, protect the welfare of the animals and to minimise the spread of disease and may be subject to challenge if the licensed conditions resulted in consumer complaint.

2.0 Section 2: Report

2.1 Background information

- 2.1.1 The authority licenses three existing proprietors and their premises for cat boarding. The aim of the legislation is to maintain minimum standards to ensure consumer protection, the welfare of the animals and to minimise the spread of disease between the cats
- 2.1.2 Since the Animal Boarding Establishments Act 1963 was brought into force a number of national standards have been produced and the catteries in the Borough reflect the guidance that existed at the time when they were built. The CIEH guidance, produced by a working party of veterinarians, animal welfare organisations, trade and local authority representatives, has stood the test of time since publication in 1995. In a recent survey by officers of 13 authorities all, except 3, required compliance with these standards for new and existing premises.
- 2.1.3 At present only one cattery within the borough meets the full standards of the Model Licence Conditions and Guidance for Cat Boarding Establishments. The other two premises meet all of the standards except with regard to the size of the sleeping and exercise areas.
- 2.1.4 Whilst it is considered that the space standards facilitate the care of the cats, there is no history to suggest a deficiency in the current management of the catteries. The facilities are well maintained and there have been no complaints concerning the premises. In the light of this experience it is recommended that the two premises that do not meet the full standard can maintain their existing facilities while owned and operated by the current licensee. Should there be a change in the facilities, the ownership or management of the business, the new standards would apply in full.
- 2.1.4 This recommendation enables the proprietors to plan for future changes to their businesses. This approach also ensures that the limited number of existing small businesses are not unduly burdened or put at financial risk as a result of implementing the new standards. The existing licensees have been consulted over the proposals and they are supportive of the proposed approach.

3. Consultation with Ward Councillors

3.1 None

4. Policy Context (including Relevant Previous Decisions)

4.1 No previous decisions are binding on the committee in considering this report and no previous decisions have been made regarding the licensing of catteries.

5. **Relevance to Corporate Priorities**

5.1 Catteries provide an important local service, providing lodgings while owners are unable to care for their pets. They also provide employment within the locality and are an aspect of a vibrant local economy. All these issues are central to Corporate Priorities.

6. **Legal Implications**

6.1 None.

7. **Financial Implications**

7.1 None

8.0 **Conclusion**

8.1 The adoption of the Model Licence Conditions and Guidance for Cat Boarding Establishments produced by the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health will enable this nationally recognised standard to be applied to facilitate the application of relevant standards through the Licensing regime.

8.2 It is recommended that the two catteries that do not meet the full standard can maintain their existing facilities while owned and operated by the current licensee. Should there be a change in the facilities, the ownership or management of the business, the new standards would apply in full. This approach will ensure that the limited number of existing small businesses are not unduly burdened or put at financial risk as a result of implementing the new standards.

9.0 **Section 3: Supporting Information/ Background Documents**

9.1 Model Licence Conditions and Guidance for Cat Boarding Establishments – Chartered Institute of Environmental Health – October 1995.