

LICENSING COMMITTEE

Extension of Animal Activity Licences 8 October 2020

Report of Director for Communities & the Environment

PURPOSE OF REPORT

For Members to determine whether to offer licence holders an extension of their animal activity licences due to Covid-19

This report is public.

RECOMMENDATIONS

(1) That licence holders be offered an extension to their licences.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Licensed animal activities, for example dog and cat boarding, hiring of horses and exhibiting of animals were severely impacted during Covid-19 lockdown. Almost all of these businesses closed down for at least three months and have still not resumed normal operating levels.

2.0 Proposal Details

2.1 It is proposed that all licensed animal activity businesses be offered the opportunity to extend their licences to compensate for the lockdown period when their businesses were affected. Licences are granted for 1, 2 or 3 years and the suggested extension is three months for all licences. The legal mechanism for this would be to vary the licences; under The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) Regulations 2018 a local authority may at any time vary a licence with the consent in writing of the licence holder.

3.0 Details of Consultation

3.1 A post on the Local Government Animal Health & Welfare Knowledge Hub received responses from five local authorities. All of these had made a decision to offer extensions to their licence holders.

3.2 One of Lancaster City Council's licensed home boarding franchises has contacted the service requesting a three-month extension in line with that being offered to their franchises in other parts of the country.

4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

	Option 1: Offer an extension (3-month suggested)	Option 2: Do not offer an extension
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supports local businesses severely affected by Covid-19 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • council does not lose income
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • council loses the equivalent of 3 months income over the next 3 years (not each year) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not consistent with other local authorities • demonstrates lack of support for local businesses
Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A small number of businesses who did not close during lockdown could benefit 	

5.0 Officer Preferred Option (and comments)

5.1 Option 1 is the preferred option, as this would assist in supporting local businesses and is consistent with other local authorities. A three-month extension is suggested.

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 Animal activity businesses have been and continue to be severely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, including a number of them having to close permanently. Offering a licence extension would demonstrate support to local businesses.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT (including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing):

Offering animal activity businesses an extension to their licences would help to support them through a very difficult time. These are small local businesses primarily located in rural areas

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The local Authority have the power to vary a licence either on the application in writing of the licence holder or on its own initiative, with the consent of the licence holder. Section 9 (a) and (b) of The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) Regulations 2018

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The financial cost of allowing a 3 month extension to all current licences is £1,786. As licences vary in length the impact will straddle several financial years.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS, such as Human Resources, Information Services, Property, Open Spaces

Not applicable

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

Not required

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

Not required

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018 - Procedural guidance notes for local authorities

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Reference: