

# Animal Welfare Charter

Regulatory Services

April 2026



# Foreword

This Charter demonstrates our commitment and aspirations in protecting and promoting the welfare of all animals. It dovetails with policies already in place to protect and enhance the rich natural environment in Waverley, such as the Biodiversity Policy and Action Plan, Tree and Woodland Policy, and Pesticides Policy, which set out how our [green spaces will be managed](#), as well as the [Climate Change Action Plan](#).

We all want to ensure that animals' welfare is protected. However, there are occasions when, through ignorance, carelessness, or neglect, the high standards of animal welfare we expect are not upheld. This is why we are introducing this Animal Welfare Charter.

There is a clear distinction between the requirement of targeted pest control where there is a risk to the health or wellbeing of the local community whilst upholding the duty of care we have towards animals as part of the Animal Welfare Act (2006). This is also the case when targeting invasive species so as to ensure native species flourish.

It is important that we have opportunities for education so that Waverley residents and visitors continue to grow shared knowledge and understanding of how different wild animals work within our local ecosystem and add value to our environment. It is equally important that we set clear, high expectations of treatment of domestic animals.

This Charter focuses, in particular, on the remit of regulatory services powers that Waverley Borough Council enforces to ensure no animal comes to unnecessary harm. It is a starting point, and we are committed to reviewing other areas / aspects of animal welfare we can protect / enhance through other council teams and services, and we will be bringing back a broader Charter in the future and be seeking to ensure it is developed still further following the creation of the West Surrey Authority.

I wholeheartedly welcome this Charter which encourages us all to work to improve protection of animal welfare.

**Cllr Adam Duce**, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability

# Contents

Introduction

[page 4](#)

Licensing of Activities involving Animals

[page 6](#)

Stray Dog Services

[page 8](#)

Responsible Pet Ownership

[page 9](#)

Contingency and Emergency Planning

[page 11](#)

Equine Welfare

[page 11](#)

Pest Control

[page 12](#)

Council Land Use

[page 13](#)

# Introduction

This charter has been adopted by Waverley Borough Council's Regulatory Service to demonstrate our commitment to protecting and promoting the welfare of all animals. It also reflects concerns of local people who care about animal welfare and any cruel treatment, abuse, or neglect of animals.

In adopting this charter, we hope that it will encourage others, organisations and individuals, to prevent unnecessary suffering of animals.

We recognise that animals are sentient beings who have a right to live free from cruel treatment and unnecessary suffering and will take this into account when developing policy.

We consider everyone has a duty of care towards animals, whether in their ownership or not, to provide for their five basic welfare needs as detailed in the Animal Welfare Act 2006.

- The need for a suitable environment
- The need for a suitable diet
- The need to be able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns
- The need to be housed with, or apart from, other animals
- The need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease

The Council takes our duties and responsibilities regarding animal welfare legislation seriously and is committed to ensuring legislation is effectively enforced. We will:

- Factor in the basic animal welfare needs when exercising our statutory powers in relation to animal health and welfare matters.
- Take proactive, proportionate, and effective use of our enforcement powers in relation to animal welfare, including working collaboratively with partner agencies and organisations when necessary.
- Raise awareness of animal welfare issues and responsibilities through social media campaigns and digital communications.
- Seek to influence others, community and business leaders and the public, who could have an impact on animal welfare, to properly consider and value animal welfare.
- Review and update this Animal Welfare Charter to reflect changes in national legislation, public opinion, and local and national circumstances, including following the creation of the West Surrey Council.
- Make sure this Animal Welfare Charter is publicly available on the Council's website and easily accessible to all members of the public, including sharing a copy with town and parish councils and other public-facing organisations in the area (such as Citizens Advice Bureaus and Wildlife charities.)



Animal Welfare Charter, Regulatory Services, April 2026

# Licensing of Activities Involving Animals

Waverley Borough Council has a statutory duty to [license premises and establishments that carry out activities involving animals](#) under the Licensing of Activities Involving Animals (England) Regulations 2018, including but not limited to:

- pet shops
- dog breeding establishments
- boarding establishments
- home boarding establishments
- day care for dogs
- animal exhibitions
- riding establishments

Additionally, we licence:

- Zoos under the Zoo Licensing Act 1981
- Dangerous Wild Animals under the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976
- Primates under the Animal Welfare (Primate Licenses) (England) Regulations.



Anyone keeping animals detailed in the legislation must be licensed, have specialist knowledge and seek professional advice on the care of the animals. Anyone selling these animals should ensure the buyer has the required license.

We take our statutory responsibilities seriously and are committed to enforcing the legislation to the best of our ability to maximise compliance and reduce animal cruelty and neglect. The animal licensing activity fees are set to encourage premises and establishments to achieve the highest welfare standards. Fees reflect the work we do in processing a license application and are the same whether a 1-, 2- or 3- year license is issued.

We will publish and maintain a publicly available list of licensed establishments, including star ratings for activities licensed under the Licensing of Activities Involving Animals (England) Regulations 2018.

To protect animal welfare, we recommend the public use licensed shops and establishments when buying their pets. Similarly, we recommend the public use licensed establishments and day care premises to look after their pets when needed. Additionally, all vendors and breeders (whether licensed or not) should ensure animals are sold to good homes and make sure they are confident that customers are able to meet an animal's welfare needs and are fully aware of their responsibilities under the Animal Welfare Act 2006.

We encourage members of the public to advise us about any concerns they have about licensing and suspected unlicensed activities involving animals.



# Stray Dog Services

The Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and the Environmental Protection (Stray Dogs) Regulations 1992, to seize and detain [stray dogs](#) within the jurisdiction of the Council. The Council is required to keep a dog for 7 days for an owner to come forward to claim them. When the owner does not come forward, we look to rehome a dog. Dogs are rarely put to sleep, only on the advice of a vet if they are sick or if they fail the temperament test for rehoming.

The Council considers the welfare of stray dogs important, and we act to make sure the welfare of stray dogs is met and that they are protected from harm.

We are committed to returning stray dogs to their owners and taking all steps available to identify and contact the owner(s) of a stray dog to arrange for swift collection.

Kennels and/or boarding establishments used in the process of carrying out our stray dog function are licensed by the appropriate authority and have clear facilities, protocols and procedures to meet the animals' welfare needs as defined by the Animal Welfare Act 2006.

When we go out to tender for our stray dog contract, we assess bids for the quality of the service to be provided, to ensure animal welfare needs will be met, and greater emphasis is placed on animal welfare needs than cost considerations. Regular contract meetings assess performance against animal welfare needs.

# Responsible Pet Ownership

The Council recognises that we have a vital role in promoting responsible pet ownership as one means to reduce animal cruelty, abuse and neglect.

The Council considers that a pet should only be purchased once the prospective purchaser has the necessary equipment, facilities, time, financial means, level of interest and expertise to properly care for the animal and their welfare needs and understand the responsibilities entailed with ownership of the pet. Some homes are unsuitable for the keeping of certain pets, and some personal circumstances could mean that adequate provision for pets is difficult if not impossible. We encourage owners to consider their circumstances before purchasing a pet to ensure that their pets will have sufficient space to avoid distress or suffering, and we discourage leaving animals unattended for an extended period at home during the day. We believe animals should never be left unattended in motor vehicles, especially in warm weather. It would be an offence to leave an animal unattended which caused pain and suffering.

The Council encourages and supports the re-homing of rescued animals from recognised societies and establishments. Equally, we support and promote fostering and re-homing schemes of animal welfare charities.

We do not approve of breeding animals for producing changes in bodily form, and/or function, which is detrimental to their health or quality of life.

To support responsible dog ownership, we will:

- Continue to provide dog faeces bins across Waverley
- Robustly enforce our [public space protection orders](#) for clearing up after your dog, prohibiting dogs from some spaces such as children's playgrounds, dogs on leads in some areas, and dogs to be put on a lead by direction of an authorised officer.
- Encourage dog walkers to abide by Surrey County Council's [Code of Conduct for dog walking in Surrey's countryside](#). Professional dog walkers can also sign up to the Code of Conduct, so their business will feature in Surrey County Council's web pages so customers will know their dogs will be cared for by businesses following industry's best practice in care and welfare.

The Council will undertake proactive work to encourage responsible pet ownership, including, for example, public awareness campaigns on dogs in warm weather, fireworks and responsible dog ownership

It is not uncommon for Regulatory Services to deal with complaints involving animals. Where we have concerns about an animal, we will act robustly to protect animal welfare, referring cases to the RSPCA and Police as needed.

# Contingency and Emergency Planning

The Council recognises our responsibility to consider animals as part of our contingency and resilience plans related to the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

## Equine Welfare

In line with the [RSPCA](#), we do not oppose an animal being tethered for short periods e.g. for grooming, cleaning out stables, having a short break in a journey or working period or in a field whilst boundary fencing is being installed or repaired. However, the Council would remind owners that a tethered horse requires adequate feed, shelter, and must have water.



# Pest Control

We run a [pest control service](#) to control public health pests.

All requests for service are evaluated, and treatments will only be carried out if necessary, and when treatments are carried out, they are done so humanely by trained experienced people and to safeguard against any impacts on non-target species.

When we go out to tender for our pest control service, we assess bids for the quality of the service to be provided, to ensure treatments are appropriate. Regular contract meetings assess performance against required standards.

We also recognise that we may need to enforce statutory powers related to pest control. In such circumstances, we will only treat pests where they represent a risk to the health or wellbeing of the local community, and treatments will be carried out humanely by experienced people and to safeguard against any impacts on non-target species.



# Council Land Use



Regulatory Services supports actions the council is taking to protect animal welfare on its own land.

- The prohibition on the sale or [giving away of animals at events](#), such as fish or other animals.
- No events involving performing animals are approved unless all the necessary licensing requirements are in place.
- Professional dog walkers who walk their dogs on the council's land are required to have a license from our [Greenspaces Team](#) to do so. The maximum number of dogs that can be walked at any one time is 4 dogs.
- Prohibition on the launching of helium filled balloons and sky lanterns releases at events. Balloons can take some years to break down and are a choking risk for grazing animals. Sky lanterns are a fire risk and choking hazard to animals too.
- No hunting (including trail-hunting or other related activities) is permitted.
- Working with others to stop any [long-term tethering of horses and ponies](#).

The Council encourages other private premises or landowners to follow its lead in protecting animal welfare.

## Contact us:

Waverley Borough Council,  
The Burys,  
Godalming, Surrey  
GU7 1HR  
01483 523 333



[Instagram.com/waverley\\_bc/](https://www.instagram.com/waverley_bc/)



[facebook.com/WaverleyBC](https://www.facebook.com/WaverleyBC)



[linkedin.com/company/waverley-borough-council](https://www.linkedin.com/company/waverley-borough-council)



[youtube.com/@WaverleyBorough](https://www.youtube.com/@WaverleyBorough)



[twitter.com/waverleybc](https://twitter.com/waverleybc)

