

Tendring *District Council*



Animal Welfare Charter

“Tendring a humane Council”

March 2025



A MESSAGE FROM THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER

Cllr Adrian Smith (Environment)

Thank you for taking the time to read the Tendring District Council Animal Welfare Charter.

Tendring District Council recognises the significant role animals play in our community. They enrich our lives and contribute greatly to our Physical and mental health. We are committed to promoting and upholding the highest standards of animal welfare within the district.

This charter sets out our commitment to ensuring the humane treatment of all animals whether they are companion animals, farm animals, or wildlife. It reflects our dedication to working with partner organisations, residents and businesses to create a safe and compassionate environment for animals. It outlines our key principles and priorities, including promoting responsible pet ownership, supporting animal rescue and rehoming and tackling animal cruelty and neglect. We also recognise the importance of protecting wildlife and their habitats within the Tendring District.

This commitment is not static, and it requires ongoing review and adaptation to reflect evolving practices and community needs. This Charter was reaffirmed unanimously by full Council on January 21st 2025, demonstrating the councils continued and unwavering support.

To ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness I recommend that this charter be reviewed, and if necessary, updated at a minimum of every five years. We encourage all residents to join us in upholding these principles and working together continuing to create a better future for animals in Tendring.

Adrian Smith
Portfolio Holder (Environment)



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TENDRING DISTRICT COUNCIL

Animal Welfare Charter

1) Introduction

Whilst the Council encourages an increased awareness across the district of the need to care for the welfare of animals, it recognises that not all matters are under its control. This charter directly focuses on the areas where the Council has direct responsibility for animal welfare by stating what it considers a priority and where it can and will take formal action. The Charter will provide information concerning the Council activities as an enforcing authority for legislation that relates to licensed premises.

2) Executive Summary

This charter provides a framework for action to protect animals and their welfare. It helps to define the role of the Council and its responsibilities for all those involved in the care of animals by:

- Providing a clear focus and principles with which to prioritise future decisions on the provision and use of resources.
- Requiring the improved capture of information on existing animal welfare standards and trends over time.
- Leading to the effective enforcement of existing and any new regulations, bringing with it a proportionate and targeted enforcement approach.
- Seeking not to add to administration burdens on businesses.
- Encouraging partnership working between different agencies to deliver good animal welfare, with clarity about respective roles and responsibilities.

3) Animal Care / Welfare

Tendring District Council believes that those who care for animals have a duty to ensure that they are treated appropriately and humanely, and that they are not subjected to cruelty or abuse. It is essential that those who care for animals meet their needs and take the necessary steps to manage and minimise the risk of harm. What constitutes 'appropriate' levels of treatment will vary depending on factors such as species and the nature of the relationship between the animal concerned and humans – for example whether they are kept for food production or as pets.

The Charter is a mixture of aspirations for the protection of animals

and to explain the Council's role in animal welfare. The Council supports all current animal welfare legislation, but it must ensure it acts within the legislative framework, resource and budgetary limits.

No extra funding is available to Local Authorities to afford the use of discretionary powers under the Animal Welfare Act, and for this reason it must be recognised that the Council will not always be able to meet everyone's needs and expectations.

Animal welfare is a necessity throughout an animal's lifetime, including the manner and timing of its death. It is imperative that an animal's death is carried out in a humane way, such as the appropriate use of euthanasia, and does not happen outside of industry standards and best practice.

Following the introduction of Tendring's charter in 2009, other Local Authorities across the country have adopted similar policies as necessary. Tendring remains as committed to secure the necessary levels of care and compassion to all animals as it has done since the introduction of this charter.

4) Working with Partners & Charities

The Council recognises the importance of working with our partners and how they can assist when issues affecting Animal Welfare are identified. Environmental Health professionals are aware of the importance of the role of the Police, RSPCA, and other reputable animal welfare charities in providing rescue facilities, ensuring freedom from suffering and resources, and the Council will seek to liaise with these organisations to meet the aims of this charter.

The Council also acknowledges that the Animal Welfare Act places no obligation on Local Authorities to use their enforcement powers. The Act is a 'common informers 'act', and this highlights how anyone is allowed to bring a prosecution for an offence. The Council recognises the valuable role the RSPCA plays in investigating offences and bringing prosecutions, particularly in relation to companion and domestic animals. All reports of animal cruelty and neglect will be forwarded to the RSPCA immediately, and officers will continue communication throughout the investigation of any referral.

5) Roles and Responsibilities

All those who interact with animals or who benefit from products of animal origin have responsibilities to consider, and in some cases provide for, their welfare. The Council will ensure its legislative responsibility towards the protection of animals is always upheld, and where appropriate, take the necessary formal enforcement action to protect animal welfare and compliance with law.

In doing so, the Council will observe all appropriate standards of welfare in its direct dealings with animals.

Where the Council has a duty to take enforcement action, it will have regard for its own Enforcement Policy and act within the boundaries set out.

All enforcement action will be carried out in a proportionate, accountable, consistent, transparent, and targeted manner.

6) Prioritisation

The Council will centre its efforts in this field by focusing on areas of priority. The choice of priority areas for action will involve difficult judgements between competing demands. In making these difficult decisions the Council will be guided by the following principles:

- The number of animals affected
- The duration of the welfare problem experienced by each affected animal
- The impact of the problem on, and the need for freedom from
- Hunger and thirst
- Discomfort
- Pain and injury
- Disease
- Inability to express normal behaviour
- Fear and distress
- Whether or not improvement is achievable and measurable; and
- The welfare impact of imposing statutory control measures.

7) Animal Welfare Charter

The Council supports the view that all animals have a right to a life free from cruel treatment and unnecessary suffering. It recognises that animals are capable of feeling, capable of enjoying a state of well being and equally capable of suffering and therefore considers animals have the right to enjoy five basic freedoms:

- Freedom from fear and distress.
- Freedom from hunger and thirst.
- Freedom from pain, disease and injury.
- Freedom from unnecessary constraint.
- Freedom from physical discomfort.

This charter does not cover every aspect of animal welfare, but it does aim to detail those areas that the council considers important and where it feels it can have some influence as a responsible and representative public body.

The Council supports all current animal welfare legislation and requests that Members of Parliament support any legislation that will improve animal welfare conditions in line with the five basic freedoms outlined above.

8) Statutory Duties

The Council has a statutory duty to licence certain establishments within the district, these being:

- Pets Shops.
- Dog Breeding Establishments.
- Dog and Cat Boarding Establishments (Including Home Boarding).
- Riding Establishments.
- Owners of Dangerous Wild Animals.

The Council will continue to ensure that the authorised council officers, and where necessary, a qualified Veterinary Surgeon, inspect these premises and that the conditions of such premises will be in line with the published guidance and model licence conditions. It will carry out annual inspections when licences are granted or renewed and unannounced inspections to ensure that the licence conditions are being adhered to.

9) Council Policies

Blood Sports

The Council does not allow hunting on Council owned land.

Circuses, Performances, Exhibitions and Displays of Animals

Having regard to the District Council's premises and land, either owned or managed, it is unlikely that they would be suitable for circuses, performances, exhibitions or displays of animals. However, it is Council policy that all applications to hold circuses, performances, exhibitions or displays of animals on any District Council land or premises will be considered individually and the decision to grant or refuse such applications will be based on a wide range of considerations, including animal welfare.

In particular where there is any reasonable doubt that all of the five freedoms set out in **Section 9 of the Animal Welfare Act 2006** will be met, no circus or travelling show using animals will be allowed on land owned by the Council. Tendring District Council will use its powers to positively promote animal welfare and will not be a partner to any act that could unreasonably jeopardise an animal's welfare.

(Note: For the purposes of the Act, an animal's needs shall be taken to include:

- Its need for a suitable environment,
- It's needs for a suitable diet,
- It's need to be able to exhibit normal behavior patterns,
- Any need it has to be housed with, or apart from, other animals, and
- Its need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease.)

Giving Animals as prizes

The conditions for hiring or letting any of the Councils facilities, premises or land, shall include a clause specifically banning the provision of live creatures, animals or fish, as prizes in full support of the RSPCA's Pets as prizes campaign. The Council supports other private premises or landowners following this lead.

This clause is in full support of the RSPCA's Pets as Prizes campaign and was reaffirmed unanimously by full Council on January 21st 2025.

Horse, Pony and Donkey Rides

Anyone offering pony rides on Council land must meet conditions as laid down by the Council. The Council supports other landowners applying similar conditions.

Domestic and Captive Animals

Dogs

The Council liaises with other organisations to promote responsible dog ownership by:

- Providing dogs faeces bins
- Promoting animal welfare by distributing animal welfare leaflets from council reception areas and placing advice on the Council Website
- Taking appropriate action against irresponsible dog owners

Stray Dogs

The authority provides a stray dog service for the collection of stray dogs within the district. The Dog Wardens can be contacted on 01255 686766 or via email at dogwardens@tendingdc.gov.uk between the hours of 09.00hrs to 17.00hrs Monday to Thursday and 09.00hrs to 16.30hrs on Friday, however, the wardens can only collect stray dogs between the hours of 0900hrs and 1400hrs Monday to Friday due to the external boarding kennel facility operating times.

To identify the dog's owner, each dog will be scanned for microchip details and will be reunited where practicable.

If the wardens have any concerns for the welfare of any dogs, the authority will liaise with the RSPCA and if any health issues are raised, the dog will be taken directly to a veterinary practice to be checked and treated where necessary.

All dogs unclaimed after the expiry of the statutory 7 day holding period are signed over to the boarding kennels in conjunction with the stray dog kennelling contract for rehoming.

Puppy Farming

The Council opposes puppy farming and supports the RSPCA in recommending that prospective dog owners purchase only puppies that are seen with their mothers. The Council would also encourage residents to consider re-homing a rescue dog rather than a puppy, in an effort to reduce the population of unwanted dogs, whilst reducing the pressure on such charities that help provide care and welfare for abandoned puppies and dogs.

Cats

The Council would encourage residents to be responsible cat owners and supports local animal welfare organisations in their efforts to educate and assist cat owners. The Council would also encourage residents to consider re-homing a rescue cat rather than a kitten, in an effort to reduce the population of unwanted cats, whilst reducing the pressure on such charities that help provide care and welfare for abandoned kittens and cats.

Responsible Pet Ownership

The Council strongly advises that anyone thinking of getting a pet should have good knowledge and /or take professional advice on the care of such animals before getting the pet. The Council works in line with pet shops to ensure that they issue pet care leaflets or other similar written instructions to customers free of charge at the time of purchase and that proper advice on the care of the animal is given.

Once the pet has been acquired, responsible pet ownership should include means of identifying the owner of the animal (e.g. micro-chipping) which is now a mandatory requirement, consideration to neutering the animal to prevent unwanted pregnancies, regular health checks, including vaccinations where required, and the safe and hygienic disposal of all animal waste. Pet owners are encouraged to control their animals properly to avoid the possibility of them causing annoyance or distress to members of the public or other animals.

Animal Hoarding

An increasing number of cases are coming to light nationally where individuals, including some private animal sanctuaries, keep many animals in unsuitable conditions. Anyone keeping large numbers of animals needs to consider carefully whether they have adequate, suitable facilities, sufficient knowledge and resources to care properly for all the animals. Professional advice should be sought. People are encouraged to report any suspected instances of animal hoarding to the Council or the RSPCA.

Pets in Council Accommodation

The Council seeks high standards for animal welfare for pets in council accommodation and has produced its own policy – Keeping Pets in Council Accommodation which is available from the Council website or Housing Services at the Town Hall

Tendring District Council will work with other social housing providers in the district to encourage the acceptance of pets within lettings policies should the opportunities arise.

RSPCA Paw Print

Tendring District Council (TDC) were awarded the Silver-level Housing award in the RSPCA PawPrints Awards in August 2024.

Tendring District Council is proud that we have been awarded the Silver-level Housing award in the RSPCA PawPrints Awards, recognising our outstanding commitment to animal welfare. This prestigious honour underscores our continuous efforts to provide exceptional animal welfare services.

The RSPCA PawPrints Awards, the only scheme of its kind, celebrates Local Authorities and public bodies for their pioneering work in animal welfare across England and Wales.

TDC was recognised for our pet-friendly housing policies and support for responsible pet ownership among council tenants. This award highlights our ongoing efforts to deliver top class animal welfare services and our dedication to improving the lives of animals within our community.

Lee Gingell, public affairs manager at the RSPCA, said: "We are thrilled to recognise Tendring District Council with the Silver-level award in Housing in this year's RSPCA PawPrints Awards. "Their commitment to animal welfare is truly commendable and reflects the high standards that the PawPrints awards aim to celebrate. "By winning this award, Tendring District Council has demonstrated

outstanding dedication to protecting, promoting and enhancing animal welfare, and we hope their achievements inspire others to strive for excellence in this vital area."

Pet Sitting Services

The Council encourages responsible pet ownership and recommends that pet owners use only licensed boarding establishments or, if using pet sitting services owners should take up references, visit the service provider and contact animal welfare organisations for advice and recommendation when required.

Horses

The Council supports the introduction of the Horse Passports Regulations (England) 2004. The Council also supports the Protection Against Cruel Tethering Act 1988 and will not allow the long term tethering of horses or ponies in an open environment, or on any land owned or managed by the Council. In line with the RSPCA, the Council does not oppose an animal being tethered for short periods, e.g. for grooming or having a short break in a journey or working period.

Equally the Council would not oppose an animal being tethered in a field for a short period whilst boundary fencing was installed or repaired. The Council would also remind owners that a tethered horse requires adequate feed and particularly water.

Dangerous Wild Animals

The Council recommends that if people are selling or keeping animals listed on the schedule of the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976 and other dangerous and/or exotic animals, they should have specialist knowledge and/or seek professional advice on the care of these animals as some of these animals can grow very large, live for a long time and can be a threat to life. Anyone who has one of the animals listed on the schedule must be licensed by the Council. The Council believes the Government should increase the number of animals listed on the schedule of Dangerous Wild Animals and supports the rigorous enforcement of current legislation.

Wildlife

The Council supports measures to conserve wildlife and in particular draws attention to the following: -

The control of animals released into the wild

The Council is concerned at the potential threat to British wildlife, pets and people by the release of non-native animals into the wild. Expert advice should be sought so that the appropriate control should be taken.

Traps and Snares

The Council is opposed to the use of snares. Where traps and snares are employed, the Council encourages the government to strengthen legislation so as to reduce the suffering of the target species and the capture of non-target species.

If trapping is required, live catch traps should be used allowing for animals to be released elsewhere, and if absolutely necessary, animals should be humanely euthanized.

Bats

The Council supports legislation that protects bats and their roosts.

Angling

The council recommends that anglers follow the code of practice based on the recommendations of the Medway¹ report. The key recommendations being: -

- The use of double and treble hooks should be kept to a minimum. These should be avoided entirely when the intention is to return the catch alive to the water.
- Fish intended for food should be killed humanely.
- Unhooking a fish humanely and safely is one of the most important skills for an angler to learn. All anglers should be equipped with disgorgers and unhooking mats and be properly trained in their use.
- Employment of the pike-gag should take fully into account the size of the fish for which it is used.
- Barbless hooks should be favoured.
- Holding periods in keep-nets should be as brief as possible.

The Council considers it essential that fishing tackle is safely disposed of to prevent injury to both domestic and wild animals and that undersized fish should

¹ The Medway Report, an enquiry sponsored by the RSPCA into angling and shooting (1979),

be returned to the water as quickly as possible. The Council would also draw anglers attention to the fact that discarded fishing tackle is considered to be litter for the purposes of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 with attendant penalties for depositing this.

All anglers are encouraged to ensure that they comply with national and regional byelaws relating to angling. Details of these byelaws can be found by visiting the Environment Agency website at www.environment-agency.gov.uk.

The Environment Agency has produced a useful free leaflet 'Golden Rules – Angling and Wildlife' which can be obtained by contacting 08459 333111. Alternatively pages from this leaflet can be viewed on the Environment Agency website at www.environment-agency.gov.uk.

Pest control

The Council promotes and supports the use of safe and humane methods of pest control only.

The Council encourages householders to seek professional advice on pest control, rather than over the counter preparations, to prevent harm to non-target species, humans and the environment. It provides a rodent control service contact to householders to ensure that a professional and safe treatment is readily available. This is chargeable in certain instances.

Pigeons

Overpopulation of pigeons in built up areas can cause health and safety problems. The Council encourages the safe and hygienic disposal of all waste, especially fast food waste products to prevent such overpopulation. Where the pigeon population must be controlled, only humane methods will be used.

Planning

Through the delivery of the planning process, the Council is committed to using the mechanisms in the planning system to ensure that animals, plants and their habitats are afforded the appropriate level of protection in accordance with their protected status.

Parks/Open Spaces

The Council makes minimum use of pesticides in all Council controlled public open spaces and encourages the introduction of wildlife and fauna into these

areas by sympathetic management. Weed control is by approved methods only. The expansion of such areas within the district is an ongoing project.

Pesticides

The Council encourages householders to use only authorised pesticides that will do no harm to the flora and fauna in the district. Members of the public should check for an up to date list of authorised pesticides (information can be found at www.pesticides.gov.uk – 01904 4557751).

Litter

Litter is not only unsightly, but much of it, such as multi-pack plastic can ties, tin cans and plastic bags can cause harm to both domestic and wild animals, therefore, the Council strongly recommends that all litter is disposed of safely in the facilities that it provides for this purpose throughout the district.

Experiments on Living Animals

The Council would support the Government looking into the use of alternative methods of research not involving animals. The Council also recognises that it is irresponsible and not in the interests of the animal for laboratory animals to be released into the wild where it may not be able to fend for itself.

Factory Farming

The Council regrets the use of intensive/factory farming and would seek that a kinder approach to farming be adopted and requests that Members of Parliament support any legislation that will improve animal welfare conditions. The Council would encourage consumers to check food labelling very carefully and to seek assistance from store managers if they are unsure of their meaning in an effort to encourage a kinder approach to farming.

Transport of Food Animals

The Council believes that the live export of animals, intended for food, is not necessary and that the slaughter of animals should take place as close to where they are reared as possible.

The Council supports the role of Trading Standards in enforcing roadside checks of livestock in transit to ensure compliance with legislation designed to protect animal welfare.

The Council supports Police action with regards to the enforcing of speed restrictions of vehicles transporting live animals and requests that enforcement be more rigorously applied.

Animal Cruelty

Those dealing with children or vulnerable adults who have suffered physical and/or mental abuse, recognise that there is a link between animal and 'people' cruelty. Indeed, a protocol exists between social services staff and the RSPCA in some Local Authority areas, whereby there is an exchange of information, and careful monitoring of those will follow.

This Council believes that there should be a requirement on Local Authorities to establish and operate such a protocol, and that police forces should also be part of such agreements, so that every effort can be made to prevent cruelty wherever it might arise.

The Council encourages the Government to support all research by other agencies on the link between animal/child and vulnerable adult abuse in an effort to reduce both animal cruelty and serious crime.

Council Purchasing/Education

Meals

It is the personal choice of a person to eat meat or not. The Council should aim to use cruelty-free, animal-friendly produce at all Council run functions or where it has an influence. The Council will seek to use non cage eggs where possible.

Fireworks

The Council supports the introduction and enforcement of legislation such as the licensing of shops selling fireworks, the limit of hours that fireworks are permitted to be used and limiting the permitted noise level to 95dB to minimise the distress caused to animals by the use of such fireworks.

Publicity

The Council will regularly update the information it provides to promote animal welfare by maintaining pages on the Councils website. It provides information on animal welfare legislation, advice and links to useful related websites.

10) Review of the Charter

The requirements under existing legislation are often subject to revision by

Regulations and Codes of Practice made under the Animal Welfare Act 2006. Tendring District Council will ensure that any new requirements are properly adopted and enforced as necessary and that this Charter will be periodically reviewed to take account of any such changes. The charter will be subject to review every 5 years or following significant changes to legislation/guidance.

For more information please contact.

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