



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Scrutiny Working Group - Tethered Horses**

Committee Room 5 - Guildhall, Swansea

Wednesday, 31 January 2018 at 10.00 am

Present: Councillor J W Jones (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

M Durke
P K Jones
D W W Thomas

Councillor(s)

J A Hale
S Pritchard
L J Tyler-Lloyd

Councillor(s)

Y V Jardine
B J Rowlands
T M White

Other Attendees

Mark Thomas	Cabinet Member - Environment Services
David Grimsell	FOSH
Major Tracey Brooks	SOSH
Neill Manley	RSPCA
Romain DeKerckhove	RSPCA

Officer(s)

Simon Clark	Team Leader - Pollution Control
Bethan Hopkins	Scrutiny Officer
Peter Richards	Principal Building Control Officer

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): C Anderson, O G James, R V Smith, G J Tanner and L V Walton

1 Apologies for Absence

2 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

None

3 Public Questions

No questions – just comments - Ms. Harry mentioned she thinks there may be a piece of legislation around where you can keep horses that are not neutered to limit breeding. She will look into this and contact Scrutiny with any updates

4 Tethered Horses Update

- Cabinet Member Mark Thomas attended the meeting along with Peter Richards and Simon Clark from Trading Standards

- Along to offer further updates were Neill Manly and Romain DeKerckhove from the RSPCA and Dave Grimsell and Major Tracey Brooks from Friends of Swansea Horses
- Mark Thomas commented that there has been much success since the original scrutiny working group was established. The recommendations which came out of the original working group have very much been taken on board and acted on
- This is in large part due to the collaborative work between agencies
- There was discussion that the trade in horses has dropped and so the monetary benefit has declined in the last two years. This may have contributed to the lower amount of horses in circulation
- Whilst this was acknowledged, it was also acknowledged that much of it is a result of effective partnership working around the issue
- Discussion around current lack of legislation regarding breeding of horses – possible avenue to challenge Welsh Government on this for the Swansea Equine Forum
- If Swansea Council officers see a horse being mistreated or in poor condition on private land they would inform RSPCA
- The keeping of horses in this way appears to be cultural and a way of people keeping horses who may not have the financial resources to stable them in the traditional way
- The general condition of the horses has been very good – there have been no major welfare issues
- Within the last year, no horses were euthanized
- Suggestions were put forward around education in communities relating to horse welfare and care
- Hillside Sanctuary is an end of life charity so the horses stay there permanently. The Working Group are exceptionally grateful for their efforts in relation to Swansea horses which are cared for by them
- There appears to be one member of the public who continues to tether horses in spite of the efforts of those involved. Swansea Council and the RSPCA are aware of the situation but could not discuss it further due to data protection issues, however they assured the Panel that the situation was in hand

5 Update from Agencies

Friends of Swansea Horses

- Significant progress has been made since the initial Working Group which benefits both the community and the financial impact for Swansea Council
- Horses used to be regularly euthanized but progress means that they are sent to Hillside Sanctuary – the interventions have moved things forward
- The momentum of the work done so far needs to be kept up. There is a danger that if we assume the problem is eradicated that it will slip backwards
- The resources need to be kept in place so if tethering arises it can be dealt with quickly and consistently
- FOSH thanked everyone for their contribution and efforts and informed the Working Group that the organisation will be disbanding

- The Working Group thanked them for their commitment and efforts and complimented their hard work

RSPCA

- There have been great improvements regarding the tethered horses issue
- The market in horses reducing has played a large part in this
- If anyone does start tethering again, the RSPCA will take a quick and consistent approach to stop it
- If the RSPCA cannot establish the owner of a tethered horse, they will ask Swansea Council to remove it, where circumstances allow the Council to do so
- Any mistreatment will be dealt with accordingly
- The RSPCA also agreed that partnership working has been very successful but we must keep vigilant and ensure that the resources are in place if the issue starts to increase again
- Thanked everyone for their contribution

6 Background Reading

The meeting ended at 11.30 am

Chair