

Councillor Jeff Jones
Convener
Tethered Horses Working Group

Please ask for: Councillor Mark Thomas
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Our Ref: MT/JW
Your Ref:
Date: 15 February 2018

BY EMAIL

Dear Jeff

TETHERED HORSES WORKING GROUP

Can I thank you and other members of the Tethered Horses Working Group for your letter dated the 13th February 2018.

I share your views that significant improvement has taken place since April 2016. Not only have the numbers of tethered horses reduced, but of the remaining ones, there are no welfare issues. This was not achieved without the help of our partners, all named in the report.

You have made a number of observations and recommendations that I would like to respond to.

1. It was suggested within the meeting that there needs to be more education available relating to horses and their welfare. Schools and colleges could offer Equine Studies as an option or community venues could look at delivering it. It was also suggested that information could be made available via relevant organisations such as the Community Farm in Fforestfach. Perhaps they could be in a position to offer training.

Response: I will explore the option of our Trading Standards Officers going into selected schools in known hotspot areas to talk to the children.

2. The Swansea Equine Forum which is a working group consisting of relevant organisations e.g. Swansea Council, RSPCA, FOSH, Pettifor Trust should continue to have our attendance and support so we can contribute and keep track of any changes in the current tethered horses situation.

Response: We will still be definitely maintaining the Swansea Enquire Forum.

3. We must not be complacent. It was mentioned in the meeting that the sale prices of horses is currently very low, this may be why fewer horses are being kept. When this market picks up and the selling of horses becomes more financially beneficial, we may see an increase in horses being tethered. As a result, we would like to see the current level of resources and contribution both in staff and effort maintained.

Response: We will not allow complacency to creep in, and will continue to resource and monitor the situation.

4. We would like to express our gratitude to the Hillside Animal Sanctuary for the substantial work they have done. They have taken numerous horses from Swansea and being an end of life charity means the horses will stay there indefinitely. This support has been invaluable.

Response: We are also grateful to the Hillside Animal Sanctuary. We were very pleased to see that through the External Funding Panel, they were awarded grant funding of £17,000 in recognition of the invaluable service they have provided in Swansea.

5. We would also like to thank Friends of Swansea Horses for their continued contribution to this cause and the information they have provided over the last two years which has helped inform the work. We wish the members the very best in their endeavours.

Response: I will repeat my thanks to FOSHH, for all their contribution to this cause. Initially I was disappointed when they announced that they were disbanding. However on reflection, that is a positive reflection on the success achieved.

6. We are aware that there is an individual 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. We would like to be assured that this will be dealt with.

Response: We are continually monitoring the situation as are the RSPCA.

7. Due to the vast improvement in the tethered horse situation in Swansea and the success of the partnership working, we hope positive media coverage highlights what has been achieved and also gives a spotlight to the organisations involved and their efforts to help tackle the problem.

Response: We will look to highlight this in the media, not only to illustrate the success of collaborative working, but to help prevent any increase in the future.

Lastly, can I thank the working group members for taking up this cause, which has in no small way lead to the successful outcome.

Yours sincerely



**COUNCILLOR MARK THOMAS
CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT SERVICES**