



Department for Environment and Community Services

Charter For the Welfare of Animals

South Gloucestershire Council's Statement of Intent

The Council recognises the needs of animals and condemns the infliction of unreasonable pain or suffering, restriction of normal behaviour or curtailing of needs.

The Council believes that it has a moral responsibility for the welfare of all captive and domestic animals and all wild animals in-so-far that its activities impinge upon them.

The Council will work to achieve these objectives in the following key areas:-

- Using its enforcement powers fairly and firmly on animal welfare matters.
- Exercising control through policy decisions in relation to activities it controls.
- Educating and advising residents and visitors of South Gloucestershire on relevant animal welfare issues.
- Providing up-to-date advice on animal welfare matters to organisations involved with animals.
- Seeking to influence, both within and outside the Council's area, persons who could have an impact on important welfare issues.

South Gloucestershire Council will amend and update the Animal Welfare Charter from time to time to reflect changes in national legislation and local circumstances.

KEY AREAS

Enforcement

The Council will exercise its legal enforcement powers in relation to the following:

Domestic Dogs

To control and protect dogs in the community, South Gloucestershire Council will fully utilise its Dog Warden Service to ensure that dog owners comply with all relevant legislation relating to dog fouling, dog identification, stray dogs and

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nuisance. The appropriate officer will endeavour to enforce these areas by providing advice and education on dog welfare issues.

South Gloucestershire Council supports the micro chipping of dogs as an effective system of permanent identification. From April 2016 it became a legal requirement for dogs to be microchipped.

The Authority can microchip for free any dog collected by its Dog Warden Service.

Transport of Live Animals

Large numbers of animals are transported from farms, poultry rearing establishments etc. to markets, slaughterhouses and ports. South Gloucestershire Council's Animal Welfare Officers will vigorously enforce the laws which control these activities to ensure that animals are properly watered, are not overcrowded, are fit to travel and vehicles are suitable for such use and will encourage those in charge of the animals at any time during transportation to be appropriately trained and knowledgeable of each species. To achieve these objectives, South Gloucestershire Council welcomes, and actively encourages, liaison with other local authorities, the Department of Environment, Food & Rural Affairs and other duly authorised enforcement agencies, where animals have been, are, or are to be transferred through its area.

Livestock Matters

South Gloucestershire Council's Animal Welfare Officers enforce the laws which relate to livestock matters. The Welfare of Animals at Markets Order 1990 is the central piece of legislation and controls matters such as how animals are moved, the conditions in which they are penned/caged, whether animals are fit and old enough to be in a market.

In addition, Animal Welfare Officers will ensure that DEFRA Codes of Practice, relating to the welfare of animals at livestock markets are adhered to.

Animal Welfare Officers will ensure that all additional requirements imposed on markets following the 2001 Foot & mouth outbreak will be enforced, these include cleansing & disinfection of the market site, vehicles transporting animals to and from the site and the bio security practices of visitors to the

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site, whether on operational days or otherwise.

Pet Shops

South Gloucestershire Council has a statutory responsibility to licence pet shops under the Pet Animals Act 1951. Applicants for licenses must comply with a set of standard licence conditions which have been drawn up by a working group consisting of representatives from the Pet Trades, The Association of District Councils and the British Veterinary Association. Licensing Officers will vigorously enforce conditions when an animal's health or welfare is at risk of being compromised. Pet shop proprietors will also be asked questions relating to the source of their stock.

At the time of licensing inspections and subsequent visits, the opportunity will be taken to pass on to the pet shop proprietor current animal welfare information and to promote the City and Guilds Certificate in Pet Shop Management or its equivalent.

Exotic Animals

South Gloucestershire Council will continue to enforce rigorously the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976 and will do all it can to discourage the illegal keeping and sale of exotic animals. South Gloucestershire Council will also ensure that its Animal Welfare Officers are knowledgeable in the farming or keeping of exotic animals for food, i.e. Wild Boar, Ostriches etc.

Dog Breeding Establishments

South Gloucestershire Council has a statutory responsibility to enforce conditions in licenced premises where dogs are bred under the Breeding of Dogs Act 1973, Breeding of Dogs Act 1991 & Breeding & Sale of Dogs (Welfare) Act 1999. South Gloucestershire Council's Animal Welfare Officers, in conjunction with a veterinary officer, will continue to rigorously enforce these, and will investigate premises where breeding is taking place without a licence being issued.

Dog and Cat Boarding Establishments

South Gloucestershire Council has a statutory responsibility to enforce licencing conditions in premises where dogs and cats are boarded under the Boarding Establishments Act 1963, and will continue to rigorously enforce these. South Gloucestershire Council's Animal Welfare Officers, will ensure the requirements

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set out in the Model Conditions for Boarding Establishments are adhered to by all owners and will strive to raise these levels by advice and education. Premises licenced under the Boarding Establishments Act 1963, will be posted on the authorities web site. The authority does not support the process of "Home Boarding" except in cases where dogs from only one home are boarded. Any persons found to be operating a premise for "Home Boarding" where dogs from more than one home are being kept will be investigated and considered for legal action under the Boarding Establishment legislation.

South Gloucestershire council are aware of growing activities such as Dog Grooming and Dog Walking as businesses. The Authority will continue to monitor these activities to ensure that they meet national guidelines and all Animal Welfare requirements. We will provide advice to businesses where requested.

Horse Riding Establishments

South Gloucestershire Council's Animal Welfare Officers, in conjunction with a veterinary officer, will continue to ensure that Horse Riding Establishments comply with licensing conditions.

South Gloucestershire Council will seek to limit the keeping of horses where there is inadequate provision for grazing and will seek the provision of off road riding and exercise areas away from vehicles to limit risks to horses and riders.

Animal Diseases

South Gloucestershire Council will put in place contingency plans with regard to Notifiable diseases such as Foot and Mouth, Anthrax, Swine Vesicular Disease, Rabies etc., which will strive to limit the spread of these diseases, and subsequent suffering, to other healthy animals. The Council will ensure, with the assistance of the Department of Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, that staff is trained in emergency procedures.

Wildlife

South Gloucestershire Council will enforce legislation in respect of habitats and protected species.

South Gloucestershire Council will support measures aimed at the conservation of wildlife through the establishment of local nature reserves, trails and

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conservation areas within the urban area. The Council will emphasise good management and will monitor all such facilities and involve local communities in conservation and management. The Council, through the Planning Services, will advise other land owners on the establishment of such areas.

South Gloucestershire Council opposes the indiscriminate destruction of animal habitats. This will be borne in mind when granting planning consents. Developers will be required to mitigate where damage is unavoidable. Management of the Council's parks, gardens and open spaces will be modified where possible to give greater priority to ecological considerations, and uncontrolled public access will be excluded from the most sensitive areas/habitats.

Zoos

- 1) The Council is responsible for licensing all zoos in its area under the provisions of the Zoo Licensing Act 1981. The Act requires regular formal inspection of zoos by a team, including three external inspectors, one being directly appointed by the local authority and two from the Secretary of State's list of persons deemed competent to inspect zoos. All are qualified veterinarians with special expertise in the treatment and welfare of zoo animals.
- 2) The Council will ensure that the formal inspection covers all features of the zoo, which are directly or indirectly relevant to the health, welfare and safety of both the visiting public and the animals. The inspection shall have regard to the latest version of the Secretary of State's Standards of Modern Zoo Practice, which requires zoos to contribute in as many ways as possible to the education of visitors.

Policy Decisions In Relation To South Gloucestershire Council Activities

South Gloucestershire Council is a large purchaser of both products and services and where relevant will take into account animal welfare issues when specifying products or services.

South Gloucestershire Council will not allow on any Council owned or managed land, rodeos, circuses or travelling menageries which include performing animals, and will use its statutory powers to prevent performing animals acts in theatres wherever possible.

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South Gloucestershire Council opposes the use of Chinese lanterns or similar products and bans the use of these products on council owned/managed land

South Gloucestershire Council will not allow the following practices at show jumping and eventing held on Council owned land or managed land:

1. competitions where obstacles are unreasonably difficult
2. the use of training or riding methods which cause distress or suffering
3. the use of drugs to alter the performance of the horse or to enable it to compete.

South Gloucestershire Council will not allow the giving of live animals as prizes at fun fairs on Council owned or managed land.

South Gloucestershire Council is opposed to hunting fox, deer or hare with dogs on land owned or administered by the Council.

South Gloucestershire Council is opposed to the unnecessary use of agrochemicals and pesticides and in the furtherance of this policy the Council will:

- Ensure that the horticultural staff work closely with animal welfare groups to use methods of weed control etc. which are not harmful to wildlife, and wherever possible, weeds controlled by the use of alternative methods and not chemicals. If chemicals must be used, they should be of a type which would have minimum effect on the environment and must be on the "approved list" published by the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs under control of Pesticide Regulations 1986.
- Ensure that where practicable, and desirable, hedgerows and roadside banks under Council control will be managed to conserve, enhance and create safe habitats for birds and animals during the breeding season, and encourage the growth of wild flowers.

South Gloucestershire Council is opposed to the use of snares and other traps which cause suffering to animals and ban their use on Council owned or managed land. This requirement will be imposed on any new contracts relating to managed lands owned by the Council. It approves of live traps only when certain

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conditions are adhered to and new/renewed licences on Council owned/managed land will include a clause reflecting this, particularly the need for them to be under the control of a skilled person adhering strictly to legislative controls.

South Gloucestershire Council will encourage those who fish in Council controlled waters or from Council controlled land to adopt the following code of practice based on the Medway Report.

1. The use of double and treble hooks should be avoided especially when the intention is to return the fish alive to the water.
2. Fish that swallowed the hook and those intended for food should be killed humanely before any attempt is made to unhook them.
3. To assist in removing hooks all anglers should possess suitable "disgorgers" appropriate to the size, and species of the fish they are likely to catch.
4. Promote the use of barbless hooks which cause less injury to the mouth of the fish and, being easier to remove, reduce the amount of handling required.
5. If keep nets are used, fish should be confined for the shortest possible time, to reduce the risk of injury.
6. Great care should be taken when handling fish to minimise damage to the thin protective layer of skin and mucus covering the scales. Damage to this layer will increase the chance infection and reduce the ability of the fish to survive.
7. Prolonged "playing" of fish, especially those destined to be returned to the water, and the use of ultra-fine tackle which necessitates such "playing", should be avoided.
8. Fish which are killed following capture should be dispatched as quickly as possible. Anglers should know how to kill a fish humanely.
9. In view of the dangers posed to wildlife and other animals by discarded fishing tackle, anglers should take the greatest care to ensure that all litter is disposed of safely.
10. Encourage the use of non lead fishing weights and a responsible attitude to the safe disposal of unwanted fishing tackle.

Angling clubs fishing in Council controlled waters or from Council controlled land will be encouraged to arrange for younger members to receive guidance from qualified instructors concerning the biology of fish and their relationships with other animals in order to help reduce the incidence of inconsiderate behaviour towards them.

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South Gloucestershire Council, as an Education Authority will:

1. encourage the management of school grounds as ecological resources;
2. investigate increasing the use of videos and computer simulations for teaching anatomy and physiology in schools as opposed to more traditional methods;
3. explain to the public and school children the law in relation to protected and non-protected species in accordance with Section 25 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996, and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species.
4. Encourage the study of animals, their welfare, conservation and the responsible ownership of pets. Each South Gloucestershire school will be encouraged to have an "Animal Welfare Policy" of its own.

South Gloucestershire Council will seek to ensure that at least one vegetarian meal, to the specification of the Vegetarian Society of Great Britain, will appear on all menus in Council run facilities or establishments where the Council has influence. Vegan meals will be made available by arrangement.

Educating and Advising Residents and Visitors of South Gloucestershire on Relevant Animal Welfare Issues

The Council's Dog Warden service will continue to develop its advisory and social welfare role. This will include promotional campaigns on good pet ownership, talks to voluntary groups and schools and the provision of display and information stands at suitable venues.

Copies of the Council's Animal Welfare Charter will be made available at all Council offices, Libraries etc. and will also be sent to other premises visited by the public, i.e. Health Centres, Citizens Advice Bureaus. It will also be published on the Council's public website

Providing up to date Advice on Animal Welfare Matters to Commercial Activities involved with Animals

The Council's Animal Welfare Officers will ensure access to leaflets clearly setting down legislative controls and including any current advice for distribution to all licensed pet shops, dog breeders, cat and dog boarders, riding establishments and keepers of dangerous wild animals.

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The Council will assist the Department of Environment, Food & Rural Affairs ensuring that the proprietors of commercial enterprises involving animals are provided with advisory leaflets etc.

The Council's Veterinary Officer can be consulted to offer advice or assistance, at cost, wherever the need arises through liaison with any Animal Welfare Officer.

The Council will seek to provide advice to abattoirs, slaughterhouses and other establishments where animals are killed for food on the premises.

**Seeking to Influence, both Within and Outside The Council's Area,
Persons who could have an Impact on Important Animal Welfare Issues**

The influencing role of the Council derives from its status as a democratic elected body able to reflect the view of the South Gloucestershire community. As a large organisation the Council has the ability to influence the animal welfare debate and by supporting and encouraging other organisations with similar interests who operate peacefully and within the law.

South Gloucestershire Council recognises that there are many areas of animal welfare concern but consider the following five areas to be the priorities for which it will try to bring about change.

Intensive animal husbandry which:

1. leads to serious health problems and physical pain for the animals involved;
and/or
2. Frustrates their natural behaviour

Selective breeding or the use of drugs which produces animals that suffer pain and death as a result of abnormal growth rates or milk production.

Encouraging the reduction, replacement and refining of the use of animals in research.

Reducing the transportation time and improving handling and transport conditions between farm, market and slaughterhouse so as to reduce animal stress.

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South Gloucestershire Council supports legislation changes to bring about:

- A redefinition of farm animals under the Treaty of Rome from "Agricultural Products" to "Sentient Beings".

A European maximum journey time for animals for slaughter of 8 hours, with the ultimate aim of banning the live transportation of animals for slaughter to Continental Europe.

- A Europe wide ban on the use of Veal Crates
- An end to the export of British animals to be raised in systems that are illegal in UK.
 - A phasing out as soon as possible of the battery cage systems for poultry.
 - An end of the use of animals in the development and testing of cosmetics.
- An end to fur farming of solitary and territorial wild animals such as mink and fox.

South Gloucestershire Council in producing this animal welfare charter considers that all 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 to express their normal behaviour.
- Freedom from physical discomfort.

The Council will look at these five freedoms when exercising its statutory powers and will use its best endeavours to promote their acceptance.

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