

Title of Report:	Animal Welfare Update
Committee Report Submitted To:	Environmental Services Committee
Date of Meeting:	9th September 2025
For Decision or For Information	For Information
To be discussed In Committee	No

Linkage to Council Strategy (2021-25)	
Strategic Theme	Healthy, Active and Engaged Communities
Outcome	Implementation of statutory requirements
Lead Officer	Head of Health & Built Environment

Estimated Timescale for Completion	
Date to be Completed	N/A

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	N/A
Included in Current Year Estimates	N/A
Capital/Revenue	N/A
Code	N/A
Staffing Costs	N/A

Legal Considerations	
Input of Legal Services Required	NO
Legal Opinion Obtained	NO

Screening Requirements	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	N/A	Date:
	EQIA Required and Completed:	N/A	Date:
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	N/A	Date:
	RNA Required and Completed:	N/A	Date:
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	N/A	Date:
	DPIA Required and Completed:	N/A	Date:

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on the work of the Animal Welfare Service within the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council area during 2024/25.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 In Northern Ireland, the welfare of animals is protected by the Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (the 2011 Act). The 2011 Act includes a duty of care in respect of all “protected animals” (i.e. animals under the control of a person whether permanently or temporarily). Responsibility for the welfare of an animal remains with the owner at all times.
- 2.2 Mid and East Antrim Borough Council Animal Welfare Staff enforce the Welfare of Animals (NI) Act 2011 across the entire Northern Region on behalf of Antrim Newtownabbey Borough Council and Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council.

3.0 Animal Welfare Statistics

- 3.1 Table 1 below provides statistics for animal welfare enforcement activity in the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council area for the period from 1 April 2024 until 31 March 2025.

Activity	No.
Calls received	452
Welfare cases	412
Animal Welfare Officer visits	412
Improvement Notices served	4
Animal seized	3
Prosecution Complete	0
Cases Sent to legal	2
Formal Cautions	0

- 3.2 Over the past 10 years, 4,904 animal welfare calls have been made to the service for the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council area resulting in 5,656 Animal Welfare Officer visits and 11 successful prosecutions.

4.0 Joint Annual Statistical Report

- 4.1 In February 2025 DAERA published the 2023 Animal Welfare Report, detailing the range, and level, of animal welfare activities during 2023, using information provided by the three enforcement bodies (DAERA, local Councils and the PSNI). The report is available at:

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/animal-welfare-service-delivery-statistical-bulletin-2023>

- 4.2 The annual report demonstrates that all three enforcement bodies made full use of the powers available to them under the Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 to progress cases and address alleged offences. Enforcement actions taken remain commensurate with the severity of welfare offences.
- 4.3 Council Animal Welfare Officers investigate complaints and take necessary measures to ensure the owner or keeper of the animal complies with the legislation. Penalties for animal welfare convictions can include fines, liability for costs, community service, and disqualification from keeping animals. Where the circumstances warrant it, custodial sentences may also be imposed.

5.0 Financial Implications

- 5.1 The Animal Welfare Service remains highly unpredictable in nature especially in relation to seizure of animals and associated variable costs including care and collection, veterinary, and legal costs. The cost of delivering the Animal Welfare Service across all Northern Ireland councils, in order to meet the statutory enforcement obligations under the Welfare of Animals (Northern Ireland) Act 2011, is approximately £1.25 million per year.
- 5.2 From 2012/13 Council animal welfare services were wholly funded through a regional grant from DAERA, however the funding was withdrawn in 2023. The cost to Council for the animal service during 2024/25 was approximately £119,000 exc vat.
- 5.3 The decision by DAERA Minister to cease Animal Welfare funding is currently the subject of a Judicial review led by Fermanagh and Omagh District Council and Belfast City Council. It is anticipated that a Judicial decision will be announced in the very near future.

6.0 Recommendation

It is recommended that Council notes this report.