

<b>Report on</b>	Animal Welfare
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	8 <sup>th</sup> September 2020
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Fiona McClements

<b>Is this report restricted for confidential business?</b>	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	X

1.0	Purpose of Report																																
1.1	To update Members regarding the levels of activity in the Animal Welfare function within the Mid Ulster District Council Area and Western Region.																																
2.0	Background																																
2.1	<p>From 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2019 until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020, the Western Region have received 1357 animal welfare calls and carried out 1641 inspections, 480 of which were carried out in the Mid Ulster District Council area. It was noted that there were 83 calls received in Mid Ulster District Council area that were not Animal Welfare cases and were referred to other agencies.</p> <table><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Period 01/04/2019 – 30/03/2020</td><td>NI</td><td>Western Region</td><td>MUDC</td></tr><tr><td>No. of Calls received to date</td><td>5908</td><td>1357</td><td>393</td></tr><tr><td>No. of Referrals other agencies</td><td>889</td><td>288</td><td>83</td></tr><tr><td>No. of Animal welfare cases</td><td>5019</td><td>1069</td><td>310</td></tr><tr><td>No. of AWO Inspection visits</td><td>8791</td><td>1641</td><td>480</td></tr><tr><td>No. Of Improvement Notices served</td><td>171</td><td>22</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>No. of cases where Animals Seized</td><td>348</td><td>41</td><td>10</td></tr></table>					Period 01/04/2019 – 30/03/2020	NI	Western Region	MUDC	No. of Calls received to date	5908	1357	393	No. of Referrals other agencies	889	288	83	No. of Animal welfare cases	5019	1069	310	No. of AWO Inspection visits	8791	1641	480	No. Of Improvement Notices served	171	22	2	No. of cases where Animals Seized	348	41	10
Period 01/04/2019 – 30/03/2020	NI	Western Region	MUDC																														
No. of Calls received to date	5908	1357	393																														
No. of Referrals other agencies	889	288	83																														
No. of Animal welfare cases	5019	1069	310																														
No. of AWO Inspection visits	8791	1641	480																														
No. Of Improvement Notices served	171	22	2																														
No. of cases where Animals Seized	348	41	10																														
3.0	Main Report																																
3.1	<p><b>Joint Annual Statistical Report</b></p> <p>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.</p>																																
3.2	<p>The review of the implementation of the 2011 Act, in 2015, recommended that Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) should publish an annual report setting out information in relation to the animal welfare service. This is the third statistical bulletin produced by the Department, using information provided by the three enforcement bodies (DAERA, local councils and the PSNI) and details the range and level of animal welfare activities during 2018 (see <i>Appendix 1 – Animal Welfare Annual Report</i>).</p>																																

3.3	Council Animal Welfare officers investigate Animal Welfare complaints and take action to ensure the owner or keeper complies with legislation. The penalties for animal welfare convictions include fines, liability for costs, community service and disqualifications from keeping animals. If the case warrants it, custodial sentences can be imposed.
3.4	Actions taken remain commensurate with the severity of welfare offences and councils have utilised the full range of enforcement options to achieve the best outcomes, including, where appropriate, prosecutions and disqualifications from the keeping of animals.
3.5	<b>Western Region Animal Welfare Forum (AWF)</b> As per the Service Level Agreements between Fermanagh & Omagh DC, Derry City & Strabane District and Mid Ulster Councils an Animal Welfare Forum meeting takes place between Animal Welfare Manager and Head of Services in respective councils. The AWF provides sub-regional liaison and ensures consistency and efficient working practice across the Councils within the Western Region.
3.6	<b>Legal Services</b> Legal Services support to the Animal Welfare function across all Councils has been provided by Belfast City Council Legal Services Department since the introduction of the Welfare of Animals Act (NI) 2011.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
4.1	<b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b>
	Financial: In relation to funding for 2020/21, Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) have now confirmed in a letter dated 10 <sup>th</sup> April 2020 that they have been able to secure a budget allocation of £1.25m for the 2020-21 financial year for the Animal Welfare Service ( <i>see Appendix 2 - DAERA Letter Animal Welfare Budget allocation to Councils</i> ). This resource funding will be made available to Councils to fulfil the statutory enforcement obligations arising from the Welfare of Animals (Northern Ireland) Act 2011.
	Human: Staff employed on a sub-regional basis by Fermanagh & Omagh DC.
	Risk Management: N/a
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b>
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: N/a
	Rural Needs Implications: N/a

<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	Members are asked to note the content of the report.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
6.1	Appendix 1 – Statistical Bulletin 2018
6.2	Appendix 2 – DAERA Letter Animal Welfare Budget allocation to Councils

**Key to Abbreviations:**

SOLACE- Society of Local Authority Chief Executives

FODC - Fermanagh and Omagh District Council

DAERA - Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

MOU – Memorandum of Understanding

DOJ- Department of Justice

SLA – Service Level Agreement

DEFRA- Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs