

14 November 2023

Dear

### **ATISN 19098 – Dog Breeding Enforcement Project**

Thank you for your request which I received on 26 October. You asked for:

1. The scope of the project and the areas of Wales it covers.
2. Which Local Authorities are working on this project.
3. How many FTE members of staff have worked on this project by year over 3 years.
4. What budget has been allocated by the Welsh Government for this project by year.
5. The measurable objectives for the project.
6. The results/progress against these objectives by year.
7. Whether the budget has been exceeded by any Local Authority.
8. Who has overall responsibility for this project within the Welsh government.
9. Details of the training/qualifications that are required for a Local Authority enforcement officer, specifically relating to animal licensing.

### **Our response**

The information you requested is enclosed.

1. In relation to the scope of the project and the areas of Wales it covers, the project which ran from June 2020 to March 2023 aimed to:
  - Ensure all breeding dogs and their puppies have good health and welfare and a good quality of life.
  - Ensure that puppies receive adequate enrichment and socialisation programmes to help equip them with the social and behavioural skills necessary to adapt to a home environment and live a good quality of life in the future.
  - Implement a new model that will afford protection to legitimate breeders, enable the identification of illegal breeders, and promote a fair-trading environment by:
    - Requiring all breeders to be either licensed or registered.
    - Implementing a robust inspection procedure and consistent enforcement, and
    - Developing an intelligence capability to support enforcement work.
  - As well as a regional investigation team, the funding provided an online information system, intelligence reporting, education and campaigns, the standardising of documentation and inspections across Local Authorities

in Wales, training for all Local Authorities in Wales and the introduction of a level 3 qualification for inspection officers.

- The project was led by Monmouthshire County Council, on behalf of Trading Standards Wales and covered Local Authorities pan Wales.
2. In relation to which Local Authorities are working on this project, please see the above.
  3. In relation to how many FTE staff worked on the project each year over the 3 years, we do not hold this breakdown however 11 regional enforcement officers, 2 support officers and 2 system co-ordinators have been trained and taken up posts.
  4. In relation to the budget allocated by Welsh Government:
    - 2020-2021 - £92,000.00
    - 2021-2022 - £567,000.00
    - 2022-2023 - £567,000.00
  5. In relation to the measurable objectives of the project, please see annex 1 at the end of this document.
  6. In relation to the results/progress against the objectives, please see annex 1 at the end of this document.
  7. In relation to whether the budget has been exceeded, the project ran within budget and did not exceed the allocated amount.
  8. In relation to who has overall responsibility of the project within Welsh Government, the project is managed by the Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer.
  9. In relation to details of the training/qualifications that are required for a Local Authority enforcement officer, no information is held. We don't hold this information as there has been no such appointments by Welsh Government. We have a monitoring role in relation to the grant management of the project but have no role in relation to how recruitment and training programmes are structured. The project has however introduced a level 3 qualification for inspection officers.

## **Next steps**

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government's Freedom of Information Officer at:

Information Rights Unit,  
Welsh Government,  
Cathays Park,

Cardiff,  
CF10 3NQ

or Email: [Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales](mailto:Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales)

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely

## Annex 1 - Measurable Objectives and Progress/Results by year

| Objectives  | Progress/Results  |
|---|---|
| <p>Development and delivery of three training sessions to Local Authority staff.</p>  | <p>Year 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First training course developed, focussing on creating consistency amongst all those involved in inspecting licensed premises and ensuring that the importance of both consistency in approach and compliance with all conditions was understood.</li> <li>• The second training developed, focussing on the paperwork requirements from application through to inspection,</li> <li>• The third training session developed, focussing on the need for accurately capturing intelligence and how this supports investigations.</li> </ul> <p>Year 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training ongoing</li> </ul> <p>Year 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By the end of Year 3, a total of 63 officers across all Local Authorities in Wales have undergone training with 8 of these officers completing the additional requirements to meet the qualification for pet sellers.</li> </ul> |
| <p>Regional expertise available to all through dedicated animal licensing officers.</p> <p>Period of intense training and development to ensure consistency</p> | <p>Year 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment and training ongoing.</li> </ul> <p>Year 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional expertise appointed and developed.</li> </ul> <p>Year 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 11 regional enforcement officers, 2 support officers and 2 system co-ordinators trained and taken up posts.</li> </ul>   |
| <p>Updated Guidance and conditions.</p>   | <p>Year 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single set of conditions agreed.</li> <li>• Single set of comprehensive working documents agreed.</li> </ul> <p>Year 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ongoing</li> </ul> <p>Year 3</p>   |

|   |   |
|---|---|
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All Local Authorities have been provided with standardised documents relevant to licensing requirements. These complement the requirements of the legislation and guidance, ensuring every aspect relevant to the premises/business is covered and inspections are carried out consistently across Wales.</li> </ul>   |
| <p>New model for breeding of puppies, kittens and sale of dogs and cats proposed.</p>   | <p>Year 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (Wales) Regulations 2021 came into force.</li> </ul> <p>Year 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New model research started and ongoing.</li> </ul> <p>Year 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing – evolving into wider responsible ownership issues.</li> </ul>  |
| <p>Use of central database by all licensed breeders in Wales</p> <p>Front end website available as point of reference by breeders, stakeholders and the public.</p> | <p>Year 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Online information system procurement and initiation.</li> </ul> <p>Year 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Centralised database developed and trialled.</li> <li>Website developed.</li> </ul> <p>Year 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Soft launch of website whilst still undergoing further development.</li> <li>Centralised database delayed but ongoing.</li> </ul>                   |
| <p>Investigations resulting in appropriate action being taken, which may or may not include legal action</p>  | <p>Year 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intelligence research and gathering commenced.</li> <li>Intelligence development ongoing</li> </ul> <p>Year 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intelligence gathering ongoing, with intelligence reporting systems in place.</li> </ul> <p>Year 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vast intelligence received in relation to unlicensed dog breeders, leading to 73 investigations.</li> </ul> |