

MEETING TITLE	DAERA/PSNI/Council Multi-Agency Animal Welfare Forum
DIVISION/BRANCH REFERENCE	AE1/26/629706
VENUE	[REDACTED]
DATE/TIME	6/11/25 at 11am
LIST OF ATTENDEES	[REDACTED]
APOLOGIES	[REDACTED]
KEY POINTS DISCUSSED	
[REDACTED] welcomed everyone to meeting and invited all to introduce themselves. 1. Minutes and action points from last meeting on 19.6.25 Previous AP4 -PSNI request support from [REDACTED] meeting [REDACTED] to request DAERA vet assistance and support from [REDACTED] in exceptional circumstances. Previous AP5 -Further discussion on viability of shared animal holding centre. Challenges noted in respect of location, availability of govt land/facilities, 3rd party provider, procurement for required size/scale, limited competition in the market. Agreed not likely to proceed at this point but will keep under review. [REDACTED] Previous AP7-Agreed PSNI to join future XL Bully meeting. [REDACTED] to extend invite to PSNI for December meeting AP Previous AP8- [REDACTED] to resend the process/procedure developed for Councils to review. AP Councils to formally request DAERA Policy and DSO to consider delegation of powers	

to allow DAERA officials to inspect and investigate welfare concerns at licensed establishments. **AP**

Points discussed in relation to previous minutes:

- **DSA** – [REDACTED] shared amended version with [REDACTED]. Changes have been agreed. Clement to circulate to all councils to take to Council Committees, noted this may take some time.
- **Paws for Thought** : Newsletter -ongoing, one planned prior to Christmas. DAERA highlighted less enforcement activity at the ports, PfT campaign over Christmas focusing on the positive outcomes eg rehoming of puppies through Almost Home. Meeting again in December to finalise plans. Update provided on work lead by [REDACTED], new posters and materials providing information on run up to Christmas. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] to attend December meeting. Agreed NIDAG also to attend as useful when dealing with illegal breeding aspects.
- DAERA open to idea of smaller PfT groups for local issues. Local areas would need to identify the areas/issues to target
- **Breeding Establishment Independent Review** ongoing, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] DAERA confirmed the panel are aware of other proposed legislative changes which recommendations will need to align with.
- USPCA CEO approached statutory agencies. Meetings have taken place with some councils and DAERA. PSNI meeting with USPCA CEO 18 November 2025. Statutory agencies highlighting the concerns regarding reporting channels, timing, information reported and updated etc. [REDACTED] to consider flowcharts for printed material **AP**. USPCA also keen to provide support services to statutory agencies, this could include animal holding accommodation. PSNI meeting with USPCA CEO 18 November 2025.
- **Licensed welfare establishments** : [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]. Councils continue to highlight legislative amendments required to address these gaps. [REDACTED] agreed DAERA officials will communicate with Councils at earliest opportunity where establishment in danger of not getting a licence. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

2. DAERA Items

[REDACTED] provided update on the Animal Welfare Pathway key reforms

- Introduction of CCTV in Slaughterhouses – legislation drafted and going to Committee for review
- Public Consultation on regulation of sellers/suppliers of puppies and kittens – Councils concerns around cats will be reflected to the Minister. Drafting of legislation has commenced, aim to be with Minister before Christmas and with Committee in January. There likely to be further meeting with Councils to advise

on direction of travel. Correspondence to SOLACE in response to general feedback received from Councils concerns about other environmental matters, including AW Pathway. [REDACTED] assured Councils, they concerns were being heard.

- Breeding Establishment Independent Review – ongoing, site visits and meeting almost completed. The panel working on report and recommendations, including consideration of canine fertility.
- Policy work ongoing – two way feedback between NIDAG and DAERA ongoing. Further consultations planned in 2026 regarding fees, shock collars, rescue and rehoming, to be consulted and delivered within current mandate. [REDACTED] highlighted the complexities of regulation in the rehoming/rescue sector, co-design required to minimise economic impacts on smaller premises and further consideration required for enforcement. [REDACTED] requested DEARA consultation must be upfront and queried if this will also fall to council responsibility.
- European legislation to be adopted in 2026, UK likely to have alignment and regulations likely follow in NI. Includes provision animal shelters not to use euthanasia, this may lead to amendment to Dogs Order, impacting on Council ability to euthanise. Recent discussion by a MLA wishing to see the council option to euthanise removed from the legislation, DAERA consider there is a use for it to remain. The EU legislation transition periods up to 5 years, potentially implementation 2032
- Responsible Dog Ownership Campaign-Schedule previously shared. Q1 key messages simple and building in videos around key themes. PSNI also wish to raise profile and will share also. [REDACTED] to remind Comms team to keep PSNI informed, DAERA to 'tag' PSNI **AP**
- Farmed animal reforms also ongoing
- [REDACTED] updated on enforcement activities regarding a seizure, progression of care and collection contract, staff training for dealing with difficult situations and persons. Working with [REDACTED] on use of BWC and with PSNI on personal safety/security issues. Councils expressed interest in similar training. [REDACTED] to provide update at next meeting. **AP**
- [REDACTED] working with [REDACTED] on ports activity. Councils to continue to provide updates from port lists.

3. PSNI Items

[REDACTED] introduced [REDACTED] from PSNI Communication team. Highlighted keen to share the enforcement bodies flowchart.

- Train the Trainers completed in South area, Fermagh, Lisburn. Outlines all statutory agency respective roles, eg AWO, Dog Wardens and who to contact. Will also be delivering through the PSNI training college. Positive feedback received.
- Spotlight documentary 3 years ago, charity had videoed offence taking place. Outcome of court case was that did not meet the evidential threshold
- Recent Spotlight report has similarities. PSNI working together with ANBC and have jointly requested information to be provided for purpose of investigation. [REDACTED] highlighted the Minister has also made it clear the need for timely information to be provided to the appropriate enforcement body.

- All reports of Wildlife Crime to go through 101 or preferably online. Online method, a reference number provided and officer returns call. [REDACTED] can support efficiently with provision of the ref number.
- Farm 999, a BBC national programme focusing on rural wildlife crime. PSNI were approached regarding issue of badger baiting, unable to facilitate.
- [REDACTED] is continuing in relation to the trade of dangerous species. PSNI, the National Wildlife Crime Unit and DAERA are working together on this issue. PSNI are currently investigating offences relating to the trade of dangerous species taking place within NI.
- [REDACTED] – DAERA meeting Monday, training day planned for Thursday, [REDACTED] attending, purpose to highlight all agency/enforcement body responsibilities.
- PSNI interested in outcome of recent LCC enforcement case involving pitbull, as to what guidance can be given out by PSNI. [REDACTED] recently confirmed with court service that there is no written copy of judgement and is reviewing with legal team if any impact on DAERA guidance. [REDACTED] briefly outlined circumstances of the case. [REDACTED] can share council report **AP** DAERA confirmed Councils are not required to change processes following outcome, and can continue to follow DAERA guidance on the Dogs Order.

4. Council Items

- Council expressed thanks for DAERA financial support provided for the delivery of officers dangerous dogs handling training and provision of equipment/PPE
- Recent FOI request from Dogs Trust received in relation to funding from government and expenditure of AW and dog control service delivery.
- ANBC/MEA working closely with PSNI in relation to Spotlight programme.
- [REDACTED] confirmed outcome of MAX case on LCCC website.
- Councils to work with DAERA in relation to Responsible Dog Ownership Campaigns and Paws for Thought.

5. AOB

- Next meeting to be held on 17/2/26 with DAERA to chair

ACTION POINTS/OFFICIAL RESPONSIBLE/TARGET DATE:

[REDACTED]

AP2 – [REDACTED] to extend invite to PSNI for December XL Bully meeting. **Cleared, [REDACTED] attended meeting**

AP3 – [REDACTED] to resend the process/procedure developed relating to joint enforcement activities relating to licenced welfare establishments for Councils to review. **Cleared, sent 6.11.25**

AP4 – Council to request in writing to DAERA that, for formal consideration by Policy and DSO, DAERA officers could be authorised under council powers to allow them to inspect and investigate welfare concerns at licensed establishments.

AP5 – [REDACTED] to consider flowcharts relating to enforcement body responsibilities/roles to be also provided in printed format. **Cleared, DAERA intending to publish printed version, awaiting council update if logo to be added (to be agreed through SOLACE on 6 March)**

AP6 – [REDACTED] to remind Comms team to keep PSNI informed, DAERA to ‘tag’ PSNI

AP7- [REDACTED] to provide update at next meeting on progression of DAERA staff training on personal safety

AP8 - [REDACTED] to share council report on outcome of recent LCC ‘Max’ pitbull case

AP9 DAERA to send invites for next meeting - **cleared**

Minutes written by:

[REDACTED]

Date:

23.2.26