

## ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA

COUNCIL - 28 June 2006

### REPORT BY CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY

#### RESPONSE TO PETITION ON DOGS AND ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR IN ST. CHARLES WARD

This report provides information for Members on action taken following the petition presented to the Council requesting action to halt the antisocial behaviour of a small number of people in relation to the use of dogs in the public areas of the St. Charles Ward.

For information

#### **1. Background**

##### 1.1 The prayer of the petition said:

"We the undersigned residents of St Charles ward call upon the police, landlords and the Council to take action to halt the antisocial behaviour of a small number of people in the public areas of the ward.

We call for extended utilisation of CCTV cameras.

We call for coordinated and resolute action to stamp out intimidation and damage to property and people by fighting dogs and pit bull terriers. Legislation already exists to require dog owners to protect residents from dogs trained to fight each other and menace adults and children. We call upon the police, landlords and the Council to use the powers they already have.

We demand that the Council of the Royal Borough employ full-time dog wardens with a duty to stop 'out-of-control dogs' menacing residents and to enforce the bylaw requiring dogs in public places to be on a lead at all times.

We demand that the Metropolitan Police, Community Police Officers and the Council Parks Police tackle antisocial behaviour and the training of fighting dogs in St Charles ward."

## **2. Action**

- 2.1 Following receipt of the petition officers had discussions with the local Police Sector Inspector. He agreed to establish a problem-solving group, with representation from the Council, Police, RSPCA and registered social landlords, to look into the issues raised.
- 2.2 The Group investigated the concerns in order to establish the extent of the problem identified by residents. This investigation established that there was some evidence of the inappropriate use of dogs and, as a result, there has been overt and covert action to tackle the small number of perpetrators. This has resulted in one arrest and further action is pending but it would be inappropriate to go into details. In addition, further operations in tandem with the RSPCA, are ongoing and the local Police team are working with registered social landlords managing properties in the area and the adjoining Safer Neighbourhoods Team, at Little Wormwood Scrubs.
- 2.3 As requested by the petitioners the Council, landlords and the Police are using all the powers that already exist to tackle this issue. These powers have changed following new legislation - the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005. This makes provision for the replacement of bylaws relating to dogs by Dog Control Orders.
- 2.4 Earlier this year the Cabinet Member for Environmental Management and Regeneration agreed to the establishment of such a Dog Control Order in the Royal Borough. The Order requires people to keep their dogs on leads (petitioners expressed concerns about dogs not being on leads). When this comes into effect, Council Officers and Police Community Support Officers will be able to issue fixed price penalty notices for infringements of the Order.
- 2.5 The petitioners called for the extended utilisation of CCTV cameras. There are some existing public CCTV cameras that cover a small part of the ward and they are being utilised to identify any problems in the area they cover. If problems persist consideration will be given to using a portable CCTV camera that can be positioned at an appropriate location.
- 2.6 The dog warden service has been involved in the problem-solving team but, at this stage, the problem is not extensive enough to warrant the employment of full-time wardens as requested by the petitioners. This situation could be reviewed if problems with dogs persist and it can be demonstrated that further attention by dog wardens represents an effective and cost effective way forward.

- 2.7 The investigations by the problem-solving Group were focused by residents on the area in and around Sunbeam Gardens. Concern was also expressed however about a small number of young people being involved in the inappropriate use of dogs and other activities in Kensington Memorial Park.
- 2.8 This has been the subject of investigation by another problem solving group led by the Inspector of the Parks Police and a small number of individuals have been identified. Some arrests have been made and further action by a range of agencies is being undertaken to address their offending behaviour. These problems will not be resolved overnight but the agencies involved are focused on tackling them.
- 2.9 The Safer Neighbourhood Team for the St. Charles Ward are keeping a very close eye on all the issues raised by the petitioners and will continue to monitor the situation and take further action if necessary.

**Councillor Lightfoot**  
**Cabinet Member for Community Safety**