

**What  
Really  
Matters?**

**Budget Option**

# **Birkenhead Kennels**

## Savings

| 2014/2015 | 2015/2016 | 2016/2017 | TOTAL |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------|
| £000s     | £000s     | £000s     | £000s |
| 40        | 0         | 0         | 40    |

## Option summary

These savings would be achieved through the development of a formal partnership to run the service with the charity Friends of Birkenhead Kennels (FOBK) which has been supporting this service on a voluntary basis for a number of years. Through this partnership the service would be delivered by FOBK with the Council retaining ownership of the building. However, the responsibility for the operational delivery of the service would be shared with the Partnership. The main areas of service transformation would be the transfer of most of the kennel staff to the employment of FOBK who would also deliver the administration, enquiry handling, vehicle requirements, building repair and maintenance, general equipment and staff protective clothing and equipment needs of the service.

## Potential impact

As well as the savings that could be delivered from this partnership, FOBK have proposed a greater focus on re-homing through their network of supporters and other animal welfare charities. As a service improvement this focus on re-homing would also be supported by a radical change in opening hours with the kennels opening seven days per week for viewing and handovers to new owners. FOBK believe that their approach would reduce the time stray dogs would have to stay in the kennels before being re-homed and reduce the overall number of dogs that have to be euthanised annually.

The FOBK proposals indicate that their new focus would be delivered with the same numbers of kennelling staff. Although the use of voluntary staff would be extended, the change of the rotas for the existing staff to enable weekend opening would affect the current 24 hour out of hours service currently provided by the Council. The current proposals from FOBK would only provide a service from 8am until 8pm. These hours would accommodate the times when 80-85% of all stray dogs are taken in at the kennels.

However, there would be no service for the remaining 15-20% of stray dogs, which includes seized dogs by the Police and dogs brought in by Social Services after 8pm and before 8am.

## Reducing the impact

As part of the launch of this proposal the new partnership would communicate with its stakeholders, including the Police and Social Services, to advise them of the alternative service providers that would be available. The partnership would ensure that a range of media and engagement techniques would be used to inform service users of the changes with advice on options for stray dogs found after 8pm and before 8am. As part of the new partnership the Senior Animal Control Officer would remain in the employment of the Council as part of the statutory duty in respect of maintaining a Dog Warden and to ensure continuing compliance with the other statutory duties relating to Animal Welfare regulation. In the medium term their job role would develop to meet the Council requirements in these areas. However, in the short term this officer would be utilised on site at the kennels to support FOBK in the transfer of responsibilities.