



*An All Party Group for Members of the National Assembly for Wales formed to promote and further the cause of animal welfare, by all means available, in Wales.*

## APGAW Brief June 2008

### Local Government in Wales - Companion Animal Welfare Enhancement Scheme

<b>Background</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Welsh Assembly Government announced in April 2008 that local authorities could apply for extra funding to ensure high animal welfare among companions animals.</li> <li><b>This is the first time a UK Government has directly funded proactive work in companion animal welfare</b></li> </ul>
<b>Funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>£700,000 will be made available to the 22 local unitary authorities in Wales each year for the next 3 years.</li> <li>An additional £200,000 per year is available for the local authorities to apply to, for 'special projects'. These have yet to be decided upon but may include for instance an investigation into puppy farming or perhaps an equine survey.</li> <li>The Welsh Assembly Government will retain an additional £50,000 for this year and £100,000 per year for the following two years, to run education and awareness campaigns etc and to gather further intelligence</li> <li>The funding is weighted towards the larger councils based on the premise that there are more companion animals where there are more people.</li> <li>The funding is designed to allow for an individual authority to afford at least one part time member of staff dedicated to this work. Larger authorities, of course, may be able to afford more than one.</li> <li>This funding is effectively ring-fenced and cannot be used for other purposes such as stray dogs.</li> </ul>
<b>Timing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The core-funding element began in April of this year and runs until April next year. Two more years following 08/09 are guaranteed and there are long term funding possibilities.</li> <li>Projects will begin immediately</li> </ul>
<b>Type of work</b>	<p>In essence this money will go to local government work on companion animals, primarily in the commercial sector, i.e. pet shops, licensing, etc. WAG aims include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raising the level of awareness of requirements of the Animal Welfare Act</li> <li>Establishing baseline data on numbers of animals, general animal welfare levels and types of situations in need of further legislation</li> <li>Educating companion animal owners</li> <li>Encouraging joint working with other agencies &amp; animal welfare organisations</li> <li>Facilitating better reporting of cruelty cases</li> </ul>
<b>Special projects</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is envisaged that local authorities will club together to run additional projects.</li> <li>A group of authorities can apply for up to £60,000 additional special project money in addition to the baseline funding mentioned already.</li> <li>The Assembly is interested in considering bids in areas suggested for legislation such as Puppy Farming, Sanctuaries and Pet Vending.</li> </ul>
<b>Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A baseline requirement is that each of the local authorities choosing to access the funding will have to sign the MOU with the Animal Welfare Network for Wales (AWNw). The RSPCA provides the secretariat for this network, for more info please visit <a href="http://www.awnwales.org">www.awnwales.org</a></li> <li>A copy of the MOU can be found on the network website</li> <li>The MOU contains 3 sections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General agreements – which outlines the work of the Forums (please see next section)</li> <li>Enforcement Agreements – this is effectively a gateway for an agreement between local authorities and any animal welfare group involved in enforcement/prosecutions.</li> <li>Training &amp; Education Agreements – is not finalised but is envisaged to provide for how the statutory and voluntary sector work together. This could include work in schools, trading standards officer training and point of sale information as well public awareness campaigns</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>The AWNW Exec Board will be working with WAG over the coming months to develop a Code of Conduct for AWNW members interaction with the local authorities on this issue and in particular at Forum meetings.</p>
<b>Local Animal Welfare Forum</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The funding requires the local authorities in Wales to run (plan, co-ordinate and Chair) local animal welfare forums and this must include all AWNW members in their area.</li> <li>These Forums will not be along local authority boundaries. Local Authorities will combine into approximately four areas, which will follow the police authority boundaries in Wales.</li> <li>Other agencies such as the police will also be attending these meetings.</li> </ul>