



## TAXI AND GENERAL SUB COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON THURSDAY, 9TH  
DECEMBER 2021 AT 10.00 A.M

PRESENT

Councillor W. Williams – Vice-Chair Presiding

Councillors:

Mrs E.M. Aldworth, D.C. Harse

Together with:

L. Morgan (Licensing Manager), S. Lewis-Williams (Senior Licensing Officer), S.M. Griffiths (Fair Trading Officer), T. Rawson (Solicitor), J. Thomas (Committee Services Officer), R. Barrett (Committee Services Officer)

Also Present:

### **Representing the Applicant**

Miss A. Thomas (Springfield Boarding Kennels and Cattery)

## **INTRODUCTION AND RECORDING ARRANGEMENTS**

The Chair welcomed all those in attendance and introductions were made. The Chair reminded those present that the meeting was being recorded and would be made available following the meeting via the Council's website – [Click Here to View](#)

### **1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

### **2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made at the beginning or during the course of the meeting.

### **3 LICENSING OF ANIMAL BOARDING ESTABLISHMENTS**

The Legal Advisor to the Sub Committee outlined the procedure for the meeting, including the order of representations and the opportunities for all parties to ask questions.

Mrs Sandra Lewis-Williams (Senior Licensing Officer) presented the report and outlined the

application submitted by Miss Angelique Thomas and Mrs Jennie Thomas, trading as Springfield Boarding Kennels and Cattery, Penpedairheol Farm, Pontllanfraith for the renewal of an Animal Boarding Establishment licence. Upon application to renew its licence for 2022, the applicant submitted a request for the Council to depart from the guidance for 3.3.4 of its adopted conditions of licence for the purposes of Commercial Dog Boarding Kennels. Condition 3.3.4 specifically relates to the provision of communal exercise areas within a commercial dog boarding establishment, which states that "Communal facilities must not be used by more than one dog at any one time unless they are from the same household".

Mrs Lewis-Williams highlighted that Caerphilly Council licence 3 different types of animal boarding establishments, namely Commercial Boarding, Commercial Day Boarding and Home Boarding. Currently, Commercial Boarding is the one boarding type that does not allow use of a communal facility by more than one dog unless from the same household.

The Sub Committee were advised that following advice from the Council's vet, and Officers carrying out an inspection at the premises, Licensing are of the view that, subject to the 13 additional conditions being added to the licence, the applicants will be able provide a safe and secure environment for boarding dogs to take part in communal group exercise area. Members were therefore referred to the recommendation set out in the Licensing Officer's report, which recommended that subject to confirmation of compliance with recommended conditions as suggested by the council's vet, the application for the licence to keep an Animal Boarding Establishment and departure from condition 3.3.4 be approved.

All parties were afforded the opportunity to ask questions of Licensing. Clarification was sought in relation to feedback from other local authorities who run kennels in this way. Mrs Lewis-Williams advised feedback has been received and if kennels in other authorities are permitted to allow communal exercise areas, they must be boarding at the kennels and must be allocated their own kennels. The Legal Advisor sought clarification on the degree of involvement from the vet in making their recommendation, including if the vet undertook a site visit and if he was aware of the exercise area dimensions being proposed. Mrs Lewis-Williams explained that the proposals had been relayed to the vet, and whilst he had not carried out a site inspection, all the necessary information had been provided to the vet, who then suggested additional conditions that were included in the Licensing report.

Representations were then invited from the applicant, Miss Angelique Thomas, who summarised her application and explained the reason she was seeking removal of condition number 3.3.4 was to allow her business to provide a better enrichment and socialisation experience for the dogs during their stay. She explained that over the past year she had visited other establishments with this provision in place and observed that the dogs were happier being able to interact more during their stay. She felt that if she could offer this freedom during exercise times, it would be beneficial to the welfare of the dog during its stay.

All parties were afforded the opportunity to ask questions, and Miss Thomas responded to questions from the Sub Committee and the Legal Advisor. A Member sought clarification on procedures the kennels has in place, for example if a dog became aggressive and attacked another dog. Miss Thomas explained all dogs are invited to a meet and greet session before their stay and background information is gathered from their owner. The dogs are introduced on a one-to-one basis before they are permitted to use the communal area, where a temperament test is recorded along with any behaviour changes. It was explained that all staff are trained to notice when a dog's behaviour is likely to change and therefore should increase the likelihood of this being noticed before an incident occurs. Members noted that the dogs are always supervised when in the communal area and only taken out in small groups which would be evaluated according to size, temperament and age. If an incident did occur the relevant insurance is in place. A Member sought clarification on how many dogs the applicant is licensed to board at one time and Miss Thomas confirmed there were 36 kennels in total. However, the kennels are never run to full capacity due to the applicant's personal choice as they feel this is too many to manage and look after at one time.

All parties were afforded the opportunity to sum up before the Taxi and General Sub Committee retired to make its decision.

Mrs Lewis-Williams advised Members that the applicant's proposed business model is considered achievable and removing Condition 3.3.4 would allow them to operate in this manner. Subject to the proposed additional conditions attached to the report, it is considered that the business could provide communal exercise for dogs in their care whilst still maintaining the safety, security and welfare of dogs in their charge.

Miss Thomas stated that she could meet all the conditions imposed by removing Condition 3.3.4 and felt that this would provide a better experience for the dogs staying at her establishment.

The Sub Committee retired at 10.30 a.m. to make its decision and reconvened at 10.58 a.m.

Following consideration of the application for the renewal of an Animal Boarding Establishment Licence for Springfield Boarding Kennels and Cattery, Penpedairheol Farm, Pontllanfraith and having regard to the Licensing Officer's report and all the representations made, the Taxi and General Sub Committee unanimously

RESOLVED that the application for the renewal of an Animal Boarding Establishment Licence be GRANTED as applied for with the removal of condition 3.3.4 of Caerphilly County Borough Council's Conditions of Licence for Commercial Dog Boarding Kennels (made pursuant to the *Animal Boarding Establishments Act 1963*) and with the recommended conditions as set out in Appendix 4 of the Licensing Officer's report.

In reaching its decision, the Sub Committee gave significant weight to the considerations made by the vet consulted by the Licensing Officer in the course of the Applicant's application and the careful development of the proposed 13 conditions within Appendix 4. The Sub Committee were satisfied with the Applicant's experience within the industry to have confidence that the 13 additional conditions in terms of the mixed use of the communal exercise yard will be complied with at all times. A further significant factor held into account by the Sub Committee in reaching their decision was the very large size of the proposed exercise yard to be used, which gave the Sub Committee confidence that the same was likely to mitigate a number of the usual risks associated with mixed dogs using the same communal exercise yard at the same time.

The Chair thanked all parties for their attendance and the meeting closed at 11.02 a.m.