

Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Commissioner
Notice of Decision



Nottinghamshire

POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER

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Date Received*:	15th October 2013
Ref*:	2013.026

TITLE: Animal Welfare – Medical Costs after retirement

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This scheme has been developed over the past 3 years and various options have been explored. The proposed scheme attached to this decision record is simple, effective and provides good governance.

This recognises the valuable contribution made by police dogs and the service they provide. The scheme provides cover for ongoing costs relating to medical injuries or illnesses as a result of working hard during their service.

A small reserve of £20k had previously been set up for when this scheme was finalised. The force and animal welfare visitors have been part of the process and provided valuable contributions in defining a scheme that would be successful.

INFORMATION IN SUPPORT OF DECISION: (e.g report or business case)REPORT October
2013.docxPolice Dog Pension
Scheme 2013.docx

Is any of the supporting information classified as non public or confidential information?**

No

✓

Yes

DECISION:

The Commissioner is requested to approve the proposed scheme.

DECLARATION:

I confirm that I do not have any disclosable pecuniary interests in this decision and I take the decision in compliance with the Code of Conduct for the Nottinghamshire Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. Any interests are indicated below:

The above request has my approval.

Signature:

Date:

16/10/13

Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Commissioner

OFFICER APPROVAL

I have been consulted about the proposal and confirm that the appropriate advice has been taken into account in the preparation of this report. I am satisfied that this is an appropriate request to be submitted to the Police and Crime Commissioner.

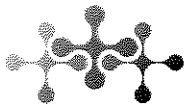
Signature:

Date:

18th October 2013.

Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Commissioner
Notice of Decision

Chief Executive



Nottinghamshire

POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER

REPORT TO THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

Date: 15 October 2013

Report of: The Chief Finance Officer

Retirement of Police Dogs- ongoing contribution for medical costs

1. Background

In 2011 a request was made to consider what care was provided to Police Dogs once they were no longer on active duty.

Police Dogs provide a full and active service to the Force during their working life and many retire as fit and healthy dogs. However, some sustain injuries and illness as a result of being worked hard and these injuries/illnesses require medication and treatment. Whilst they are still working dogs this treatment and care is paid for through the Force budget.

An initial review was undertaken by the Animal Welfare Lay visitor team, which explored various options including the possibility of an external insurance scheme.

2. Findings & Options

On retirement the dogs themselves are not suitable for re-homing in family homes and therefore in the main stay with the handler that they have worked with. Some are sold or re-homed with farmers and security firms. The Dogs are "sold as seen" to the farmers and security firms. The cost of ongoing care therefore transfers to the handlers/farmers/security firms.

The officers handling dogs requested that we consider continuing to pay for the dogs medical costs after retirement for their full life.

The dogs themselves retire at all ages dependent on their own fitness and can live for up to 6+ years after retirement.

Not all of the medical costs incurred relate to injury/illness as a result of work. Some items of medical care are general care that all dogs would incur (e.g. worming).

As part of the review we contacted the RSPCA, Dogs Trust, Petscreen and Pedigree Charity to ascertain if these organisations had schemes that we could join which would ensure ongoing care. There were no schemes that provided this care and the RSPCA were not interested because the police dogs were not ever going to be suitable for family dogs.

We also considered insurance as an option. The PCC's insurance brokers reviewed several policies and contacted the main insurers in the pet insurance field. These also did not have any suitable policies that extended beyond family dogs and certainly did not include those with pre-existing medical conditions.

However, through one of the PCC Animal Welfare Visitors contact with Simon Wheeler contact was made with Agria Pet Insurance, who has an excellent track record of animal care in Sweden; with the possibility of writing a specific insurance policy for our needs. If this policy was possible and successful then the company would have the opportunity to offer it to all other police forces.

The company undertook a without prejudice review to see if they could produce a policy that was mutually agreeable and cost effective. However, they found that this was not something that they could provide.

Therefore, if there is to be any assistance with ongoing medical care costs this would have to be an in-house policy or to continue not providing any additional assistance.

More recently Essex has introduced a scheme, which has charitable trust status. It is called the Essex Retired Dog Fund and is an independent organisation, which has no direct association with Essex Police. However, the Force has welcomed the establishment of this organisation, which is funded by donations and fund raising.

ACC Jupp and the force PSD have been involved and consulted in relation to this proposal and are in favour of the scheme being put into action.

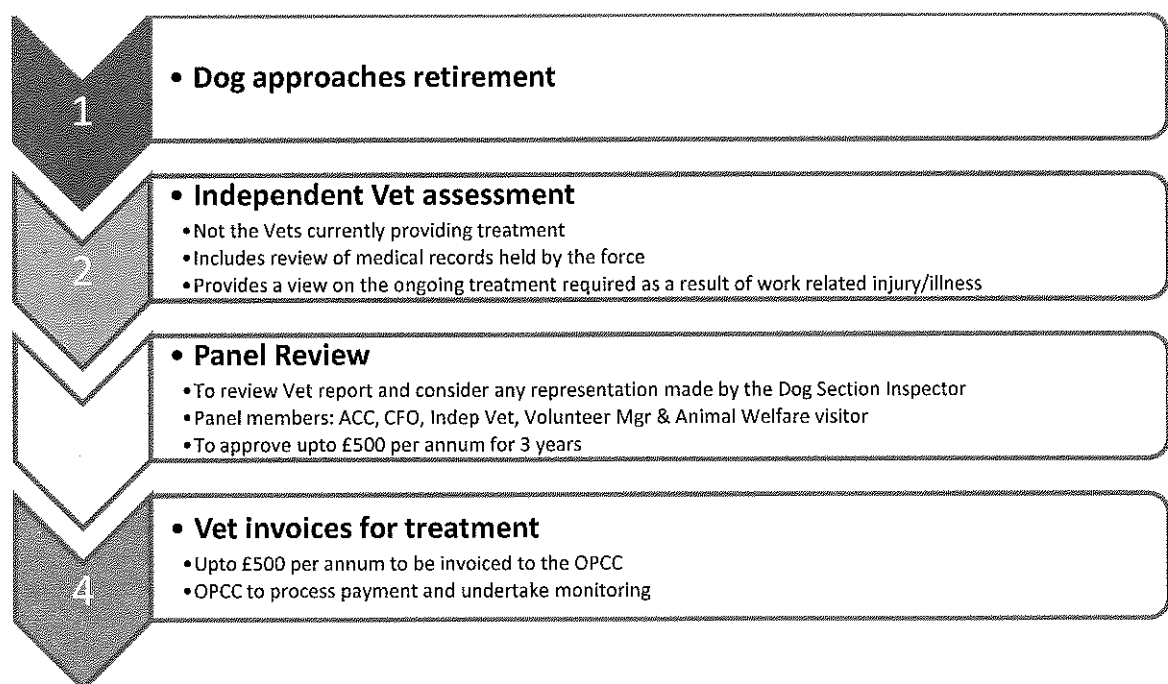
3. Summary of proposed scheme

Any proposed scheme would need to be fully accountable and auditable with good governance arrangements. It would also need to be cost effective. To pump prime any proposed scheme £20,000 has been set aside in an earmarked reserve.

Given the budget constraints that the organisation is currently working under the cost of running the scheme would need to be contained and therefore the amount and duration of any payments would have to be limited.

The proposed scheme intends to focus a very limited financial resource at the dogs with the greatest need.

In summary the proposed scheme would be as follows:



It is hoped that this is the start of a scheme that will develop over time (possibly learning from other schemes as they are set up) and the possibility of generating income from donations and fund raising is something that will need to be explored further.

In 2013-14 it is anticipated that a total of 4 dogs may need to retire, with 1 dog possibly in 2014-15 and 4 dogs in 2015-16. None of these dogs are suffering any major illness or condition that will affect its working life.

However, if all 4 dogs due to retire in 2013-14 made the maximum call on the scheme this would cost £2,000 per annum totalling £6,000 over 3 years. If all of the above dogs made the maximum call on the scheme this would cost £9,000 over the next 3 years.

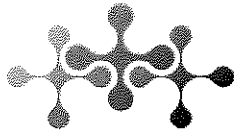
As with any scheme there may be exceptional cases that need to be considered. If this is the case the panel would have the power to either increase the payment in any one year up to a further £500 or consider making a payment after the 3 years also up to a further £500.

The East midlands Strategic Commercial Unit would be used to ensure an independent veterinary practice is used for the provision of independent advice and review at the most economical price.

4. Recommendations

It is recommended that the proposed scheme and as detailed in this report and Appendix A- Policy & Procedures is approved.

Further consideration to investigating the possibility of charitable trust status will be considered once this scheme is established.



Nottinghamshire

POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER

Assist Police Dog Pension Scheme 2013
Type of Document: Policy & Procedures
Version: 1
Registered Owner: Charlotte Radford
Author: Jackie Nash
Effective Date: October 2013
Review Date: October 2014
Replaces document (if applicable)
Linked Documents:

Functional owner

Signed: _____ **Date:** 16 October 2013
Name: Charlotte Radford
Post: Chief Finance Officer

Authorised (Head of Dept/FEG)

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____
Name: ACC Steve Jupp
Post: Assistant Chief Constable

Table of Contents

SECTION 1 VERSION CONTROL..... 2

SECTION 2 BACKGROUND..... 2

SECTION 3 AIMS / OBJECTIVES 2

SECTION 4 DETAILS 3

4.1 Inspectors Report

4.2 Procurement Panel

4.3 Panel Decisions

4.4 Reports

4.5 Illness after Retirement

4.6 Payment of Funds

4.7 Current Veterinarian

4.8 Current Predictions

SECTION 5 LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE..... 5

SECTION 1 VERSION CONTROL

Version No.	Date	Post Holder/Author	Post	Reason for Issue
1	27/02/13	Jackie Nash	Volunteer Manager	Medical Retirement Policy for Police Dogs

SECTION 2 BACKGROUND

When police dogs retire, in many instances they will remain with their handler at their family home.

Veterinary fees are paid for in respect of working dogs, but financial assistance ends when the dog retires. The responsibility for the dogs ongoing welfare transfers with ownership to the handlers (or others who take ownership).

Some dogs work up to their retirement age, but others who may have been injured on duty or are unable to carry out their duties due to illness and therefore, may retire earlier than expected.

The purpose of the Medical Retirement Scheme for Police Dogs is to assist with financial support in the provision of healthcare for retired police dogs.

SECTION 3 AIMS / OBJECTIVES

When a dog approaches retirement either due to ill health or old age, a retirement fund will ensure that medical expenses relating to work related injuries/illnesses are reimbursed for 3 years, up to £500 per year, based on an individual veterinary assessment. This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

SECTION 4 DETAILS

4.1 Governance

Any scheme that is introduced needs to ensure it is fully independent with robust governance arrangements, which are regularly reviewed.

It is proposed that the decision making relating to this policy is undertaken by an independent panel.

In the interests of independence and fairness a report from a veterinary practice (not currently used by the Force for veterinary services) will be considered together with a report from the Dog Section Inspector. The policy and procedure will be reviewed annually and alternative options, not already explored, will be considered for appropriateness to Nottinghamshire.

4.2 Panel

A Panel will be established made up of a Force Representative (ACC) an Animal Welfare Lay Visitor, the Animal Welfare Scheme Manager, the Chief Finance Officer and the Veterinary providing the assessment.

This Panel will meet annually and if necessary, during the year where additional retirement above those estimated needs to be considered.

4.3 Panel Decisions

The Panel are delegated authority to:

- Consider the reports of the Independent Vet and Dog Section Inspector on the dogs due to retire.
- Agree the specific payments that will be covered for each individual dog, up to a value of £500 per annum for 3 years.
- Consider and approve additional payments for exceptional circumstances up to a further £500 during the 3 years or for a further payment of £500 after the initial 3 year period.
- Make recommendations on potential changes to the Scheme.

4.4 Reports

4.4.1 Inspectors Report

An initial Inspectors report will be required on all police dogs approaching retirement to include the medical history of the dog. This report can highlight exceptional issues that relate to individual dogs for the panel to consider.

4.4.2 Veterinary Report

Following examination of the dog(s) and the medical records the Independent Vet will produce a report indicating what injuries, illnesses are a result of working as a police dog and what medication or treatment the dog is likely to need over the next 3 years as a result.

4.5 Illness after Retirement

A further report will be presented to the Panel on any dog developing illness or injury and requiring medical attention during the first 3 years, which can possibly be attributed to being caused by work as a police dog.

The dog will be reassessed by the independent veterinary as to whether the illness/injury is due to the age of the dog, an unrelated condition since retirement or a condition more than likely caused by working conditions.

A dog developing a condition after the first 3 years will be assessed on individual circumstances following an initial request to the Panel. The Panel will decide whether this is an exceptional circumstance and what course of action to take (eg further vet review).

4.6 Payment of Funds

A Revenue Reserve has been set aside to pump prime any scheme set in place.

The Panel will determine what payments are approved for each individual dogs treatment.

The owner of the dog will be responsible for taking the dog for veterinary treatment. Where the costs relate to the approved treatments the veterinary practice should be requested to invoice the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. The invoice should detail specifically the treatment being invoiced.

The payment of this invoice will follow the usual procedure for creditor payments, once the Animal Welfare Scheme Manager has verified that this is an approved payment and within the financial and time limits of the scheme.

4.7 Current Veterinarian

The current tendered veterinarian is Park View Veterinary Clinic, Mansfield Woodhouse.

Tender is due to expire April 2014 but with the possibility of extension until April 2016. Discounts have been negotiated which may be honoured for retired dogs previously in their care.

4.8 Current Predictions

In Financial Year 2013-14 the planned retirements are 2 General Working Dogs and 2 Specialist Dogs.

Predicted for Financial Year 2014-15 possibly 1 dog.

Predicted for 2015-16 possibly 4 dogs, but this depends on fitness levels.

There are no dogs at this current time suffering any major illness or condition that will affect its working life.

SECTION 5 LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

This document has been drafted to comply with the general and specific duties in the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, Data Protection, Freedom of Information Act, European Convention of Human Rights and other legislation relevant to the area of policing such as, Employment Act 2002, Disability Discrimination Act 1995, Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and Employment Relations Act 1999.

