



**Council Meeting to be held on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2023**

**Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor E. O'Donovan**

I will move at the next Meeting that Limerick City and County Council appoint Authorised Officers to deal with animal welfare issues within Limerick City and County, as per the Animal Health and Welfare Act, 2013.

**Reply**

Having given detailed consideration to the Notice of Motion from Cllr O'Donovan I would like to set out the current situation and the possible implications of such an appointment below.

Currently the duties outlined under the Animal Welfare Act 2013 for Limerick are the responsibility of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and An Garda Síochána. Complaints relating to Animal Welfare received by the Council are routed to these organisations as appropriate.

Under the Animal Health and Welfare Act, the Minister may appoint authorised officers or appoint by way of Service Level Agreement an organisation to carry out functions under the act e.g. ISPCA. A local authority may also appoint an authorised officer for its functional area.

An Garda Síochána have, through Sections 39 and 40 of the Act, the powers of authorised officers and may enforce provisions of the Act and execute arrest without warrant on finding suspected breaches of the Act.

The Department of Agriculture investigates cases under the Animal Cruelty Act 2013 through its Divisional Veterinary Officers supported by a national investigation team. A recent review by the department concluded that to perform its duties effectively under this Act that “a core group of highly-skilled and trained investigators is needed to carry out any type of investigation to the standard required for court”.



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This inspection/investigative capability is supplemented by a Central Investigations Division. The Investigations Division's remit is to carry out investigations and enquiries across all areas of the Department. The team is multidisciplinary and the mix of staff expertise and backgrounds in the staffing complement reflects the nature and focus of the work. There are no plans to reduce the staff numbers in the division.

The appointment of an Animal Welfare Officer under the Act may necessitate an investment in subsequent services and facilities. There would be associated veterinary costs with any operation. It may also necessitate the provision of facilities for any seized animals either directly or on behalf of the Council. The costs relating to these activities, which would include security costs for the facility, could increase substantially. It is likely that as the Department have already provided these services that the Department would not recoup these costs.

The issues involved in the appointment of such an officer are wide and complex. An Garda Síochána and the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine have extensive powers under the Act. These resources are far in excess of what the Local Authority could provide.

The budget costs in relation to the provision of such duties would likely be a multiple of any salary costs and would not significantly add to the resources or powers available to the carrying out of the duties under the Act. An appropriate budget for any proposed services and facilities would need to be provided for in the Annual Budget. Sanction would also be required from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage where a new post is created.

**Vincent Murray**

**Director of Services**

**Planning, Environment & Place-Making**

**19<sup>th</sup> May 2023**



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**Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor S. Kiely**

I will move at the next Meeting that a full review of parklets and build-outs be undertaken to ascertain their necessity and current use.

**Reply**

The Council is currently preparing a City Centre Public Realm Strategy. This strategy will include a review of the condition of the existing streetscape and will bring forward proposals to enhance our public areas and green spaces. As part of this review, a cross-departmental team has been convened to review all street furniture including the parklets and build-outs put in place by the Council as a response to the COVID pandemic.

**Vincent Murray**

**Director of Services**

**Planning, Environment & Place-Making**

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