

From Control to Care: AWAC's Recommendations to CPSC on New Animal Services Model

The City of London Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (AWAC) supports the Community and Protective Services Committee (CPSC) September 9, 2013 recommendation and City Council's September 17, 2013 resolution to defer the award of RFP 12-18 with respect to animal welfare services for a period of six months so that additional information may be gathered with respect to contract metrics, measureables and language that could be incorporated into the contract.

In this document, AWAC is pleased to provide CPSC and Council with our recommendations regarding the above. We believe these eleven recommendations will help to move the currently proposed model from a "control" focus to one that is more "care" focused.

Executive Summary

AWAC believes a "care focused" model is one where no healthy (or treatable) animals are killed for lack of space or the lack of trying to place them in caring, permanent homes. The recommendations within this document support this model, divided into six priorities we would like to see fully implemented in the new contract.

These six priorities are presented in the following *priority listing*, with the highest priorities at the top:

- A – Improve Accountability and Transparency**
- B – Improve Shelter Facility**
- C – Exceed Industry Standards for Animal Care**
- D – Establish An Animal Sanctuary.**
- E – Expand City Initiatives**
- F – Improve Pet Identification and Protect the Privacy of Foster Homes**

Priority Level A: Highest Priorities: Improve Transparency and Accountability

(A1) Recommendation – Establish a No-Kill Standard for Companion Animals

All opportunities should be explored and exhausted before killing an animal is considered and administered. Euthanasia is a last resort for animals who are too sick or injured that they cannot recover. We recommend that the contract to achieve a 90% live exit rate.

(A2) Recommendation – Establish a Panel to Review Animals Killed/Euthanized

We recommend that a panel be established to review all cases of animals killed or euthanized during the previous month. This panel would include: an accredited, neutral qualified veterinarian; a member of City staff; a service provider representative; and community representative(s). This panel would be a joint effort that would help all parties better understand why some animals are not being saved and help improve the live exit rate.

(A3) Recommendation – Euthanasia Process and Protocols

The amount of stress an animal experiences while being destroyed is directly related to the methods and drugs used. Euthanasia/kill methods and protocols used at the city shelter must be the most humane methods of ending the lives of domestic or wild animals.¹ This would include pre-sedation for all animals. A veterinarian must be present with the animals for the duration of this process.

(A4) Recommendation – Require Quarterly and Annual Reporting From Contractor

Progressive and incremental improvement is the hallmark of any successful organization, whether government, not-for-profit or business enterprise. It is therefore a reasonable expectation that the animal services provider would be required to do likewise.

We recommend that the reporting requirements include the quarterly, as well as annual, release of performance statistics, including euthanasia and kill rates. The numbers should reflect actual kill rates and be reported in real numbers, not in percentages per segment of the population, and using plain language. Quarterly reports should be released to Council and to the public website within 30 days of the end of the previous quarter. Annual reports should be released to Council and the public website within 90 days after the end of the previous fiscal period. These reports should include goals and targets for improvement, and how these targets will be reached, as well as summaries of panel witness reviews. When contract conditions are not being met, consequences to the contractor must be considered.

Every report should be available on the City website, which would help enhance public trust and encourage participation in community programs. In addition, it could encourage more Londoners to comply with licensing, especially if they see annual reports showing how their license fees are being used to provide valuable services to the City's companion animals and their owner/guardians. Toronto Animal Services uses a detailed reporting model which Council has already recommended that City Staff examine (www.toronto.ca).

¹ For more comprehensive information on sheltering standards, see: 2010 Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters by the American Association of Shelter Veterinarians (<http://oacu.od.nih.gov/disaster/ShelterGuide.pdf>).