**Decision log: PCCG-2023-003**



**MINUTES OF THE ANIMAL WELFARE VISITING SCHEME**

**HELD BOTH REMOTELY ON TEAMS AND IN PERSON IN YEW MEETING ROOM, POLICE HEADQUARTERS ON 17th APRIL 2023 at 4:00 PM**

**PRESENT:** Nicola Warren – Interim Chair, Scheme Administrator, OPCC (NW)

Steve Lewis - Animal Welfare Visitor – (SL)

Sarah Fowler – Animal Welfare Visitor (HF)

Helen Lawless – Animal Welfare Visitor (HL)

Linda Mason – Animal Welfare Visitor (LM)

Kirsty Buckland – Animal Welfare Visitor (KB)

Shane Underwood– Inspector-Roads Policing Specialist, Operations (SU)

David Davies - Sergeant - Roads Policing Specialist, Operations (DD)

Louise Crawford – Dogs Trust

Emma Smith – Inspector - RSPCA

Ceri Davis – Assistant Scheme Administrator, OPCC (CD)

**The meeting commenced at 4:10 p.m.**

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|  | **Notes and Actions** | **Action** |
| **1.** | **Apologies** |  |
|  | Apologies for absence were received from Victoria Waite, Chloe Bradley-Thomas, Caroline Herbert and Andrew Watkins. |  |
| **2.** | **Minutes and Actions from Previous Meetings** |  |
|  | The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record.  **Action 3**  NW asked the visitors to continue to advise CD in advance of apologies of attendance and if they would be attending in person so that the reception desk could be notified of the names of the visitors expected.  NW informed the visitors that the revised Terms of Reference had been circulated to include the new Inspector.  SU introduced himself to the panel as the new Inspector for the Roads Policing Operations Team.  **Action 6**  DD informed the visitors that he had reviewed the new check sheets from the Dogs Trust for completion by the Force. These included the home environment welfare criteria, out of kennel dog welfare criteria, vet health check and general welfare criteria. DD advised that the Sergeant would conduct the Home Kennel checks and the vet check form may incur charges from the veterinary practice, but this was being explored.  DD advised the visitors that two candidates had been successful following the recruitment process, one female and one male candidate and they were undertaking their six-week training course.  DD informed us there was a slight delay in training as a result of one of the police dogs (PD) not meeting the standards required and the dog had been returned to the breeder. A replacement dog had been sought and was progressing well. | **DD** |
| **3.** | **Chair & Vice Chair Nominations** |  |
|  | NW informed the visitors that there had been no nominations received for the roles of Chair or Vice Chair and she would continue in the role. |  |
| **4.** | **Scheme Update** |  |
|  | NW informed the visitors that there were nine visitors on the scheme as Emelia and Tracey had sadly left the scheme following changes in their circumstances. NW advised us that she had passed on best wishes on behalf of the scheme.  NW advised us the reduced number of visitors would provide more opportunity to carry out visits.  NW thanked ES for her assistance and support in ensuring all visitors received their face-to-face training.  DD queried a section on the visit report form which asks if a Canine First Kit was present in the handler’s vehicle. DD advised following instructions from the vet there was nothing dog specific required in the first aid kits. All handlers were supplied with their own first aid kit and a specific Canine Kit was not necessary. Visit report form to be amended  DD asked LC if guidance could be provided for sourcing a dog first aid course.  DD informed the visitors there were no issues accessing veterinary care, there was a 24-hour emergency Veterinary practice available in Gwent but would use the force veterinary practice for routine appointments.  NW thanked DD for his support with organising extra visits in March to assist with AW Visitor training and for ensuring visits could be arranged on a monthly basis as planned as all dogs had received a visit within the year.  DD advised the visitors there was sixteen handlers on the team with twenty-four PDs; three of the dogs were not yet licensed and on the training course. All handlers had a general-purpose PD.  DD advised the handlers there were four shifts with three handlers on each shift providing continuous cover.  No issues of concern had been raised on the report forms that had been submitted to the OPCC since the last meeting.  It was suggested the record of dogs to be visited was sorted in date order for ease rather than being highlighted. CD to update.  NW asked the visitors to ensure their ID cards were up to date. SF advised the phone number provided for the Warrant Cards department was not in service. CD to contact Warrant Cards to obtain the correct contact number.  NW asked the visitors to inform the OPCC if they experienced any issues obtaining their renewal ID cards.  NW asked for the visitors to advise the OPCC in advance if they had planned holidays and if they were unable to carry out a visit to make contact with the other visitors to swap in the first instance or email the OPCC to rearrange.  NW asked DD to advise on any future dog training that visitors can observe. DD agreed to advise the OPCC when training courses were planned, to provide an opportunity for several PDs to be visited at one time.  NW thanked the visitors for their continued support.  SL raised a minor observation that some leather leads appeared to be dirty, had cracks or stitching had started to come away.  DD advised the visitors that the handlers were responsible for their own equipment and the equipment was possibly dirty following an operational call out. If any equipment was not fit for purpose or had a safety issue it would be replaced. DD would raise the matter with the handlers to check. | **CD**  **LC**  **CD**  **CD**  **DD**  **DD** |
| **5.** | **Operational Update from the Dog Section** |  |
|  | DD informed the meeting of a number of positive operational results by the dogs which included a large amount of money and drugs seized.  PD Kai was successful in catching and detaining an offender using a track and trace after a police car was stolen. PD Kona conducted a successful track and trace following an attempted burglary on a Residential Home.  NW asked how the team was working since the merging of the Roads Policing Specialist Operations (RPSO) with the Dog section. DD explained the new model was working well. The daily work demand was received from the Local Policing Areas (LPAs) and the Dog section worked closely with the RPSO. When not tasked by the LPAs they would be tasked by the RPSO.  SU informed the visitors that the dog handlers were now part of a team who were briefed together and integrated with wider numbers of officers as a team which prevented isolation and loneliness. His observations of the model were positive. |  |
| **6.** | **AOB** |  |
|  | ES queried if checks carried out to ensure new PDs were coming from a licensed breeder.  DD informed the meeting that the relevant due diligence checks were carried out beforehand to ensure they came from a reputable source and veterinary checks were also carried out.  ES queried if there were any statistics available to show the number of times their dogs were deployed and that their dogs were not overlooked or kept in vehicles due some officers carrying out more admin-based roles or training instructor roles.  DD assured the meeting that the dogs were deployed and exercised regularly. When training courses were being carried out the dogs were involved in the training, although they may not be involved in as many operational call outs they would still be exercised.  SL informed the meeting while on a visit he was pleased that the handler had explained the use of the vent lock on the vehicle which allowed natural flow of air into the back of the vehicle for the dog to keep the dog cool and that this was used in all dog vehicles.  DD informed the panel that retired PD Ozman was still looking for a retirement home. DD asked should anyone known to the visitors be interested in rehoming an ex-police dog, to make contact. |  |
| **7.** | **Date of Next Meeting** |  |
|  | The next meeting will be held at **4pm, on 3rd July 2023.** |  |

**Meeting concluded at 4:50pm**

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| Jeff Cuthbert B.SC., MDIPD, Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent |
| I confirm I have considered whether or not I have any personal or prejudicial interest in this matter and take the proposed decision in compliance with my code of conduct.  Any such interests are recorded below.  The above request has my approval. |
| Signed |
| Date  23/05/2023 |

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| Contact Officer |  |
| Name | Nicola Warren |
| Position | Governance Officer |
| Telephone |  |
| Email | Nicola.warren@gwent.police.uk |
| Background papers |  |