Introduction

Section 64 of the Companion Animals Act 1998 allows that a seized animal, including surrendered animals that have not been claimed, may be sold or destroyed by Council if a relevant notice has been given and the animal has been held by Council for the required time. Times vary between 7 and 14 days depending on the circumstances.

Council officers from time to time seize or receive feral or infant companion animals that are very difficult to handle and care for. Feral animals in particular pose considerable safety risks to staff.

Section 64(2) of the Companion Animals Act 1998 does make provisions for the management of these feral and infant companion animals in that:

“the council may, in accordance with any policy that has been adopted by the council in relation to the management of feral or infant companion animals, destroy the seized or surrendered animal concerned before the end of any such period referred to in subsection (1).”

This Procedure satisfies the legislation and therefore provides for the humane destruction of animals which would otherwise be subjected to confinement prior to being euthenaised at the end of 7 days.

Destruction of Feral or Infant companion animals

Where companion animals which are seized or received under the Act, are assessed as being “feral” or “infant” they may be euthenaised provided the following requirements are satisfied by the Ranger staff involved.

- The assessment is carried out by at least two Council Rangers, one of which has at least 12 months experience.
- An owner is not able to be found.

Feral animals

- The animal has no prospect of re-homing.
- To keep the animal for the statutory period of 7 days would involve an unacceptable level of cruelty.

Infant animals

- The animal is not able to be adequately cared for at the companion animal facility. (“Adequately” includes complying with any relevant guidelines in relation to feeding and heating of accommodation)
- Re-homing is not likely at the end of the statutory period of 7 days.
- Other agencies or organisations are unable to take over the care of the animal.