

Monmouthshire Select Committee Minutes

Meeting of Place Scrutiny Committee held at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr USK on Thursday, 19th March, 2026 at 2.00 pm

Councillors Present

County Councillor Jane Lucas (Chair)
County Councillor (Vice Chair)

Officers in Attendance

Robert McGowan, Policy and Scrutiny Officer

County Councillors: Louise Brown, Emma Bryn, Lisa Dymock, John Crook, Tony Easson, Su McConnel, M. Newell and Peter Strong

1. Declarations of Interest

None.

2. Public Open Forum

A resident's video submission was played to the committee, in which the following concerns were raised:

- Strong public opposition to the closure: petitions, Town Council support, and consultation results are overwhelmingly against it.
- Concern that this opposition was not acknowledged in the report; the perception that democratic views were ignored.
- Traffic being pushed onto Somerset Road, creating congestion and safety risks.
- Goldwire Lane provides vital resilience: it remained passable during flooding when the main road is closed.
- The Experimental TRO is undermined by unclear signage, Google Maps routing, and inconsistent traffic apparatus.
- The consultation had low engagement, was poorly timed (during/after Covid), and not representative.
- Increased safety concerns on Somerset Road for children and pedestrians; cyclists are now using the lane and creating conflicts.
- The fatal collision at the Somerset/Wonastow junction was not properly considered.
- Existing pedestrian/cycle infrastructure (e.g. Drybridge Street) was described as inadequate.
- Questions were raised as to whether pedestrian responsibility was fairly considered alongside motorist responsibility.

3. Prohibition of driving except for access, Goldwire Lane, Monmouth - To scrutinise the consultation and options regarding Goldwire Lane, Monmouth.

Cabinet Member Catrin Maby delivered a presentation and answered the members' questions with Graham Kinsella, Carl Touhig and Debra Hill-Howells.

The Cabinet Member presented the report, explaining that the experimental TRO had been introduced for road safety reasons, following a request from elderly local residents, who used this route to travel on foot or on mobility scooters to the community centre, church and into town. It was noted on investigation that the road was too narrow to allow vehicles to pass other road users, and that cars attempting to exit onto Drybridge Street also posed a hazard to oncoming traffic and to those using the pavement. It was considered that the main vehicle route along Somerset Road was more suitable for cars, being full width, while other road users needed their own safe route, provided by this Lane, which continues directly on from the old pedestrian bridge over Clawdd Ddu.

Questions and comments:

Did children have a voice in the consultation?

The Cabinet Member explained that consultation was carried out with those directly affected on the specific section of the lane. Wider consultation (including with children across the area) would have been a very large exercise if undertaken for every small road-safety intervention across the county. When the wider public TRO consultation went out, those who objected were generally drivers using that one section, not residents specifically contacted. The Cabinet Member acknowledged that if the lane were to be reopened, a much wider consultation might be appropriate, covering all the surrounding residential areas.

If the lane were reopened to through-traffic, would a risk assessment be required? Would the Council be liable if a collision occurred after reversing safety improvements?

The officer replied that a formal risk assessment would not necessarily be required, but a follow-up report explaining the rationale for any decision would be needed, including potential outcomes. They stated that collisions on the public highway are normally attributed to driver or pedestrian error, although environmental factors can sometimes be considered. The Cabinet Member added that given the known hazards (narrow pavements, blind corners, heavy pedestrian use), if reopening were ever proposed, a much broader consultation should probably be carried out due to the wider impact.

Why was an alternative public footpath (running from the Riverside Hotel into the estate) missed from the map, given that it provides a safe route for pedestrians including wheelchair users?

The Cabinet Member responded that this path is private land belonging to the hotel, not an adopted public footpath. She stated that people had reported falls and accidents using it, that it contains narrow sections and metal features, and that MCC cannot require the hotel to adapt it for prams or mobility scooters. Therefore, it is not considered a viable or safe alternative route to the Goldwire Lane pedestrian access.

Are decisions being made based on anecdotal evidence rather than on the formal consultation results and other documented evidence?

The Cabinet Member acknowledged the role of consultation but emphasized that consultation is not a referendum. Instead, it is used to gather the specific concerns raised by residents – primarily flooding and questions about shared space design. She stated that the Council had addressed these concerns directly (e.g., confirming that Goldwire Lane could be used in a flood). She highlighted that the decision is based on safety evidence, the physical constraints of the lane, and risks to vulnerable pedestrians.

The alternative route has seen a fatality, whereas Goldwire Lane has only had near misses. Should this outweigh the case for closure and instead prompt redesign rather than restricting vehicle access?

The Cabinet Member replied that the key issue is the physical width and constraints of Goldwire Lane, which make shared-space solutions unworkable. She explained that on such a narrow lane, cars would stack up behind pedestrians and wheelchair users, creating more hazards. She also noted that the Netherlands-style shared space examples require decades of cultural adjustment and much wider road space. Therefore, redesigning Goldwire Lane to allow through-traffic safely is not feasible.

The Town Council previously recommended creating a safe shared-space exit rather than closing the lane. Why is this being set aside?

The Cabinet Member explained that she had examined the Town Council's position, which was made in January 2025, before residents fully understood that the flooding concern had been addressed. She reported that some town councillors subsequently indicated their concerns were largely flooding-related. She reiterated that consultation is not a vote but a way to gather issues which the Council believes it has addressed.

Can the Council work with residents to find a way to keep the road open while ensuring safety for everyone?

The Cabinet Member argued that reopening while maintaining safety is not realistically achievable due to the narrow width, the volume of pedestrian and mobility-aid use, and the inability to engineer a safe shared-space solution. She maintained that restricting traffic is the only viable solution that protects vulnerable users while allowing emergency access when needed.

A member stated that she walks past the lane several times a week and sees hundreds of children using it daily to get to and from school. Since the restriction was introduced, the lane has become noticeably quieter and feels safer. She noted that consultees had asked for a shared-space approach, but the lane is too narrow to engineer wider pavements or physical safety measures. At one end, the pavement is only a foot wide, and there is a blind bend near Drybridge Street. She shared that she had previously been hit by a vehicle at the blind corner when a driver reversed into her as she was crossing. She felt the consultation did not adequately capture the experiences or views of children who use the lane extensively.

The member wondered whether, if the lane were reopened to through-traffic despite known hazards, the Council could be held liable if a collision occurred – especially given that children are unpredictable and vulnerable road users. She argued that reducing vehicle numbers clearly reduces the risk of collisions, and any decision that knowingly increases risk should be backed by a formal risk-based justification.

A member described helping a woman who was struggling to exit Goldwire Lane safely. Cars were backing up behind her, causing pressure and distress. He recounted speaking to the drivers queued behind her – several said they had “used it for years” and did not consider the signage meaningful, implying the restriction was being ignored. He emphasized that pedestrians and mobility-scooter users can experience significant anxiety and difficulty when vehicles continue to use the lane. Based on what he witnessed, he stated that he would support the proposal to close Goldwire Lane to vehicles (other than access) in future.

A member argued that the footpath by the Riverside Hotel provides pedestrian and wheelchair access and should be properly considered as an alternative route. She acknowledged it is private land but suggested that this does not preclude negotiation. She noted that MCC could explore discussions with the hotel to improve the path's safety – potentially with support such as a pedestrian safety grant – rather than dismissing it outright. She highlighted the strength of public opposition in the consultation results and expressed concern that alternative options had not been fully considered despite this feedback. The member questioned how the public would know that the ‘Access Only’ rules can be ignored during flooding, noting that current signage gives no indication of this exemption. Her overall position was that, given the consultation results and the concerns raised, the Council needs to properly examine alternative pedestrian routes and clarify exemptions, rather than conclude that closure is the only solution.

A member stated that he visited Goldwire Lane recently to refresh his understanding and made extensive notes. His observations closely matched the concerns and reasoning set out by the Cabinet Member, particularly around safety and pedestrian vulnerability. He felt that contributors had not presented substantive evidence against the safety case. He stated that he does not like shared spaces where pedestrians and cars mix, describing them as unsafe in practice. He noted that organisations such as RNIB have also raised concerns about shared spaces, particularly for visually impaired people. He stated that many people currently using Goldwire Lane are elderly or have mobility challenges; a longer or more difficult alternative route could be beyond their capabilities. He agreed that better signage is required, particularly to help habitual drivers understand the restriction and its meaning. He highlighted that the Council has a legal

duty to plan for and deliver continuous improvements in active travel. Therefore, the default position should be closure to through-traffic unless compelling evidence outweighs that duty.

Why can't alternative pedestrian routes (e.g., the Riverside Hotel path) be explored or negotiated as safer options?

The Cabinet Member showed an image of the Riverside Hotel path and explained it is private land belonging to the hotel, not an adopted pedestrian route, that the Council cannot require the hotel to alter it, and she has had reports of accidents and falls on that path. It also contains narrow and dark sections and is not safe for prams, mobility scooters, or elderly residents. She concluded that it is not a viable alternative and cannot replace the direct pedestrian route on Goldwire Lane.

Would it be possible to negotiate improvements with the hotel (e.g., through grants) to make the path safe?

The Cabinet Member reiterated that the path is not suitable, even before negotiation. Because it is private, MCC cannot insist on improvements. Even if widened, it does not serve the same function as the current pedestrian route (which connects directly to the estates via the town ditch path). Therefore, negotiation would not create an equivalent route suitable for vulnerable users.

The signage does not make clear that drivers may use the lane during flooding – how will people know?

The officer responded that Highways signage must comply with the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions, which means that only prescribed signs can be used. The only lawful sign for this restriction is the existing 'Prohibition of Driving – Except for Access' sign. No additional sign can legally be added to explain exceptions (e.g., flooding) because TSRGD provides no lawful sign to indicate 'Except during flooding'. He concluded that the current signage is compliant and cannot be supplemented with bespoke wording.

Have Shared Spaces been properly considered?

The Cabinet Member confirmed that shared-space options were examined earlier in the process. The lane is too narrow to accommodate a shared-space design safely, as cars would stack behind pedestrians and wheelchairs. Priority rules used in countries like the Netherlands require much wider roads and decades of behavioural adjustment. Therefore, a shared-space solution is not viable on Goldwire Lane.

What about the legal duty to improve active travel?

The officer reinforced that the signage already in place is the correct one for implementing active-travel-oriented restrictions. The Cabinet Member emphasized that Goldwire Lane is already a major pedestrian corridor with heavy use by elderly residents and children. The Council has a statutory obligation to improve active travel and reduce vehicle conflict.

A member noted that the traffic-monitoring data in the report did not include times of day (e.g., peak vs non-peak), making it difficult to understand how traffic flows were actually affected throughout the day. She observed that the consultation showed substantial opposition but felt this had not been fully accounted for in the interpretation.

Could bollards or a defined walking/scooting corridor be considered, allowing both vehicle access (one-way) and safe pedestrian space?

The officer responded that Goldwire Lane is already one-way (downhill towards Drybridge Street). The narrow margin-strip footway cannot be widened sufficiently to create a safe segregated pedestrian path. Because of the limited width, it is not possible to maintain vehicle access and also create the bollarded or widened pedestrian area suggested.

A member clarified that the fatality referenced earlier occurred at the Somerset Road/Wonastow Road junction, caused by a cyclist striking a pedestrian, not a collision involving vehicles from Goldwire Lane. He emphasized that both the pedestrian and cyclist later died, and the incident was widely reported. He stated that elderly residents of flats use Goldwire Lane regularly as a walking route; many had raised safety concerns directly with him and the Cabinet Member. Some residents may not feel confident having their voices heard in the formal consultation process. He argued that the Riverside Hotel path is not a realistic or logical route for residents from Overmonnow: the distance and layout make it unsuitable, especially given the need to

navigate around the roundabout and crossing. Pedestrians typically follow the 'desire line' through Goldwire Lane, not the much longer and less direct route.

He described his direct experience of the flooding: during floods, Goldwire Lane is often not passable because vehicles risk engine failure from water. The Council usually blocks the road, and pumps operate to clear water into the river. The most recent flood involved the Monnow river overflowing into the area, not just the brook.

Are there wider road-safety concerns at the exit from Goldwire Lane on to Drybridge Street?

The officer acknowledged that visibility is restricted at the exit. In such circumstances, drivers are expected to drive according to the prevailing conditions, approaching slowly and with heightened awareness.

A member supported the view that the alternative route via the Riverside Hotel should be fully examined before closing Goldwire Lane, arguing that councillors must ensure all options have been properly considered. He stressed that councillors must prioritise the formal consultation results and the views of local residents and the Town Council, rather than anecdotal evidence presented during the meeting. He argued that the project is not sufficiently developed to justify closure at this stage and that significant work remains before the committee can make a responsible decision. He stated that it would be a dereliction of duty to proceed now, and recommended not closing the road yet, pending further investigation of the issues raised.

A member expressed concern that over 200 objections had been received and questioned whether the Council had done enough to engage with, respond to, or mitigate the concerns raised by objectors. He emphasized the need to 'sell the scheme' to residents and questioned what had 'gone wrong' in the consultation process. He questioned why the consultation results so strongly opposed the closure, and implied that the Council needs to understand and address the reasons for this imbalance before taking action.

Has the Council done enough to address the concerns raised by the 227 objectors to the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order?

The report includes an appendix listing every objection and an officer response to each one. All individuals who submitted comments in the consultation will receive a copy of the report, including the responses to their objections. This is the standard process for TRO consultations.

Have sufficient mitigation measures been put in place to convince objectors that closure is necessary?

All mitigation responses are contained in the officer's written responses in the report appendix. These responses will be formally communicated to objectors.

The Chair stated that she knows the area intimately, having grown up locally, attended school nearby, and walked the route extensively in her youth and adulthood. She emphasized she has recently observed the lane being used and believes people are generally considerate to vulnerable pedestrians. She noted that the Highway Code gives pedestrians priority when crossing, drivers are expected to use 'peep and creep' techniques at blind junctions, and many junctions in Monmouthshire have restricted visibility; this is not unique to Goldwire Lane. She argued that both motorists and pedestrians hold responsibility for situational awareness.

She questioned whether a pinch-point design – similar to the one on Monnow Street – could improve safety by giving pedestrians a priority moment before vehicles pass. She suggested that parts of the lane, further up where it is wider, could accommodate shared-space-style design.

Regarding an alternative route near the hotel, she noted that while footpaths exist through the estates, many pedestrians also exit via the area near the garage, suggesting the path network is more complex than the map implied. Regarding flooding, she emphasized the major disruption caused by the previous T-junction changes and waterworks in Monmouth, which she believes created the surge in traffic along Goldwire Lane during the period of concern.

She felt that safety evidence is important but supported the view that more work and investigation may be needed before a final decision on closure.

A member stressed that councillors have a clear duty to reflect the outcome of the consultation and the Town Council's position, rather than relying on anecdotal comments, and argued that the scale and strength of opposition should not be ignored. He stated that the scheme was far

from complete and required substantial further work to address the concerns raised and therefore recommended that the committee should not support proceeding with the closure at this stage. Instead, he urged the Council to continue working with local residents and explore alternative options, warning that moving forward prematurely would amount to a serious failure to represent residents properly, consult adequately, and investigate other solutions.

An officer summarized the team's position: the committee was to consider a report prepared for a Cabinet Member decision on the outcome of the consultation into the experimental Traffic Regulation Order, with the recommendation that it be made permanent. Officers would emphasise that the consultation was carried out properly and fairly, and that the responses were fully considered and addressed in the report. The main concerns raised related to continued access during flooding or emergencies, increased congestion and inconvenience, and calls for a shared-use arrangement; officers clarified that access during floods or emergencies would be retained, that traffic counts and available data did not support claims of increased congestion or unreasonable inconvenience (including the additional 0.3-mile diversion), and that shared use was not supported due to safety risks and conflicts for vulnerable users, particularly those with sensory impairments. Making the order permanent was presented as supporting active travel objectives and Welsh Government requirements, though it was acknowledged that change and the concentration of traffic onto one exit are concerns for residents. Officers would reject any claim that the process or consultation had been mishandled, stressing that while not all views could be agreed with, the recommendation was based on objective, technical evidence, and it was for the committee to agree or disagree with that officer-led assessment.

Can the Experimental Order be extended or restarted, to address unresolved concerns?

An experimental TRO cannot be extended past 18 months. To restart one, the existing order would need to lapse, and there must be a period where the lane returns to 'normal' (unrestricted) conditions. This is not advisable and not something officers would be comfortable recommending.

Chair's Summary:

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and for their contributions.

Following a further discussion, it was proposed that the Committee formally recommend that 'The committee does not endorse making the order permanent and recommends that Cabinet reviews all options further.'

This was put to a vote, at which members voted 4 in favour and 4 against, with one abstention. With the Chair's casting vote, the motion was carried. This recommendation is not binding but will accompany the report to Cabinet.– **ACTION**

4. Animal Welfare - To understand the roles and responsibilities of the council's Animal Welfare team, and its relationship with the RSPCA.

The Chair noted that the report title should have been '...its relationship with the RSPCA and other bodies'.

Gareth Walters and Zoe Phillips delivered a presentation and answered the members' questions.

The overview set out that Monmouthshire's Animal Health & Welfare Service plays a critical role in protecting animal welfare, public health, the local economy and community wellbeing, delivering both statutory and increasingly essential non-statutory functions as welfare pressures rise. Gareth Walters explained that the service operates with limited and highly specialized resources, including a small team of animal health and trading standards officers and support from the national Animal Licensing Wales (ALW) model. Zoe Phillips outlined the extensive statutory powers held by local authorities under animal health and welfare legislation, including inspection, enforcement and seizure powers, and emphasized that these powers do not extend to charities such as the RSPCA, which cannot lawfully enter premises or take enforcement action without council or police involvement.

The presentation also highlighted the breadth of regulatory work undertaken, from farm and market inspections to dog-breeding, abattoir investigations and reactive welfare complaints, alongside growing pressures linked to increased companion-animal cases, cost-of-living impacts and reduced capacity in charities and policing. Limits on data-sharing with charities were explained in legal terms, particularly around GDPR and the absence of statutory powers. Looking ahead, Gareth identified key priorities including workforce resilience, embedding the ALW national approach, preparing for new legislation and managing rising and more complex enforcement demands, warning of reputational risks if expectations and resources are misaligned. He concluded by stressing the strategic role of members in shaping realistic expectations, helping residents understand the council's powers and constraints, and recognising that animal welfare issues often sit within wider social challenges.

Questions:

How many inspectors does the Council have to cover the whole of Monmouthshire?

The Council currently has 3.8 FTE officers covering Animal Health and Fair Trading. One post is temporary, funded through the feed delivery programme. Another officer has a broader Trading Standards remit, reducing capacity. For licensing work, Animal Licensing Wales has 10 officers available nationally, but they cover all of Wales, not just Monmouthshire.

How is the service managing with so few officers?

The team's work is highly reactive, responding to issues as they arise. They rely on additional expert support from Animal Licensing Wales when necessary. If temporary funding stopped, the capacity challenge would worsen.

Has there been an increase in animal neglect cases due to the COVID-era surge in dog ownership?

There is no formal data available to quantify the increase. However, the service is seeing a rise in issues involving dogs, with problems likely still building rather than peaking. Some cases are hidden because veterinary practices deal with many issues directly, so the full picture is not visible to the Council.

Residents say veterinary bills are extremely high — does the Council have any role in vet-practice regulation?

The Council does not regulate veterinary businesses. However, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) is actively investigating vet-practice pricing and commercial practices. Their interim report identifies practices the CMA believes are problematic or unfair, including issues linked to large corporate ownership. The Veterinary Surgeons Act is currently under review, and a consultation is open. Officers encourage members (and the public) to contribute to that consultation, as it could help address concerns around fees and veterinary regulation.

When the Council rescues animals (such as horses on verges or farmland), what powers does it have to remove them, and who ultimately pays for their care?

The Council can take animals into possession only if they are suffering or if they are likely to suffer and urgent action is required. When animals are removed they must be accommodated in appropriate facilities (e.g., through charity partners). Costs can be recovered if a prosecution succeeds. In farm-animal cases, seized livestock can sometimes be sold to recover costs. In companion-animal cases (dogs, etc.), there is usually no resale value, so costs fall back on the Council if court processes are slow. Officers must act case-by-case, balancing urgency, welfare, and cost, but cost is not allowed to prevent action where suffering is evident.

Do officers try to work with owners before enforcement, and how far does that go before animals are seized?

Yes, the Council always tries to work with owners first. This includes advice, 'Improvement notices', repeat visits, and escalating non-compliance gradually. Only when this fails, or where animals are actively suffering, do officers move to seizure or stronger enforcement.

Are there risks that officers are pulled into issues that are not strictly animal-welfare problems?

Yes, officers often get drawn into wider community problems where an animal is present, even if the primary issue is not welfare. If they had earlier information, they could often intervene before matters escalate. The team encourages members to contact the team early when problems emerge.

Is society doing enough to tackle animal neglect? Why are basic welfare concerns (e.g., dogs left outside, lack of warmth, poor treatment) not acted upon?

Enforcement thresholds are set by legislation (Animal Welfare Act 2006). Officers can only intervene when there is evidence of suffering or a likely risk of suffering. National legislation is outdated and not always fit for purpose; Wales is pressing for reforms. EU Regulation 2017/625 effectively requires councils to enforce more welfare work – but without matching resources. More resourcing and updated legislation are needed to address exactly the kinds of concerns raised.

Should dog and cat ownership require licensing, given the scale of abuse and neglect?

Licensing of owners would require new primary legislation, which is not currently in place. Welsh Government is reviewing several aspects of dog-breeding legislation, which may indirectly address irresponsible ownership. Animal Licensing Wales is already tackling unlicensed breeders and tightening enforcement at the breeding stage, which is the root of later problems.

As effective action requires co-operation, why can't councils and charities (e.g., RSPCA, Dogs Trust, Battersea) share intelligence to protect animals?

Under GDPR and the Data Protection Act, the Council is not legally permitted to share data with non-statutory bodies. RSPCA and other charities have no legal enforcement powers, so there is no lawful gateway for data-sharing. Conversely, some charities also refuse to share data back with councils. This is a major operational challenge and is being raised nationally.

What legislation prevents 'back-street' breeding, and how is the Council tackling it?

Two different laws apply: 1. Dog Breeding (Wales) Regulations 2014 (a licence is required if a breeder has three or more breeding bitches and three or more litters per year) and 2. Licensing of Activities Involving Animals Regulations (LAIA; if someone makes over £1,000 profit and advertises puppies as a business, they require a licence, even for a single litter.) A recent barrister's opinion confirms that many one-off online sellers do meet the definition of a business and therefore require licences. Non-compliant breeders are now being formally written to. Mentioning an HMRC referral often stops illegal breeders abruptly.

How can responsible dog ownership be promoted? Education is essential, as children often notice signs of mistreatment first.

Officers agree that early education is crucial and aligns with national priorities. The team's preventative work has reduced due to capacity pressures, and they now act reactively far more than they would like. Embedding animal-welfare awareness in the curriculum could help to change long-term culture and prevent future problems.

Can more be done through social media and public communication?

Animal Licensing Wales is developing stronger public-education content, including increased social media guidance. Their website is being expanded into an information portal for responsible ownership and licensing rules.

Do the fixed-penalty-notice powers proposed by officers apply to domestic situations as well as commercial settings (e.g., kennels, breeders)?

Yes, the aim is for fixed penalty notices (FPNs) to apply to any breach of Section 9 duty of care, which covers all animals, including those in domestic homes. However, this would require new legislative powers, which are currently being discussed with Welsh Government. Using FPNs would allow LAs to intervene earlier and recover costs, but they are not currently available.

How difficult is it to obtain a warrant in domestic-premises cases, and what kind of evidence do you need?

It is difficult. Entry into private dwellings engages human-rights protections, so officers must justify necessity. Evidence must show an animal is suffering, or is likely to suffer, and a warrant is needed to secure evidence or reach the animal. Getting a warrant requires clear intelligence (complaints, vet evidence, photos, etc.), legal thresholds being met, and a magistrate's approval. Warrants are often used when dealing with commercial breeders operating inside domestic homes, where evidence supports repeated breeding or business activity.

If councils cannot share information with the RSPCA due to data-protection law, how does enforcement work in practice?

Councils cannot legally share personal data (names, addresses, case details) with the RSPCA because the RSPCA is not a statutory authority and has no enforcement powers under animal-welfare legislation. GDPR and the Data Protection Act prohibit creating informal gateways for sharing. The RSPCA also increasingly refuses to share information back with councils, citing their own legal obligations.

If an animal is suffering in a house but no breeding is taking place, who deals with it?

Historically, such cases went to the RSPCA because they handled domestic issues voluntarily. However, they now take fewer cases, and police also have reduced capacity. This means councils are increasingly being pulled into domestic welfare situations even though resources and powers are limited.

Are there legal mechanisms that allow councils to intervene more readily in domestic-animal-welfare cases?

Section 18 of the Animal Welfare Act allows councils to intervene only when there is evidence of suffering or a clear likelihood of it. Officers emphasise that Section 19 (entry/search) powers cannot be used simply because people suspect neglect – the legal threshold must still be met. Some councils argue the Animal Health Act might permit easier entry, but officers consider this to be incompatible with human-rights law, and warrants remain essential.

Chair's Summary:

Thank you to the officers for their presentation and responses to the members' questions. The committee requests that they receive a copy of the slide deck, and that an all-Members Workshop on the topic is arranged – **ACTIONS**

5. Place Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme and Action List

A list of Surplus Assets has been received and will be sent on to members for consideration as to the possibility of scheduling an item on them e.g. on 21st May – for members to consider further on receipt of the list – **ACTION**

6. Cabinet and Council Work Planner

Noted.

7. To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes were agreed. |

8. Next Meeting: 21st May 2026

The meeting ended at **Time Not Specified**