

Deputations

Culture and Communities Committee

10.00 am Friday, 23rd August, 2024

Dean of Guild Court Room - City Chambers

Deputations

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CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL
SPECIAL CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Item No 3

23 AUGUST 2024

DEPUTATION REQUESTS

Subject	Deputations
Item 7.1 – Firework Control Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kirsty Jenkins, Policy Officer, OneKind (written deputation only)• Ruairidh Nichols, Senior Public Affairs Officer, Dogs Trust (verbal deputation)

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Fireworks control zone

Deputation to City of Edinburgh Council

21/8/24



OneKind is very supportive of the proposal for a Firework Control Zone (FCZ) for the whole of the City of Edinburgh boundary area, to protect animal welfare. Fireworks cause fear and distress, often intense, to animals of many species including companions, horses, farmed animals, and wild animals. For some animals there are long-lasting effects; repeated episodes of stress and reactive behaviour can have a cumulative effect over time, and this can also elevate an animal's response to other sudden noises such as thunder or slamming doors.

Cats Protection's Cats and their Stats report 2023 states that 32% of people with cats in Scotland say that their cat show obvious fear when experiencing fireworks. Signs include fearful body language, hiding, and trying to escape or run away. Similarly, various reports estimate that close to half of dogs are scared by fireworks. Many people with dogs and rehoming centre workers find it heart-breaking to see how scared their dogs are and be unable to help them. In more severe cases dogs are destructive and self-harming, due to the intensity of their distress. Small animals like rabbits and guinea pigs are also impacted, possibly even more if they live outside, though signs can be harder for people to recognise.

Horses exhibit a range of behaviours indicating fear and anxiety related to fireworks, including sweating, trembling, fence/box walking and diarrhoea. They will naturally try to flee and can break loose and/or injure themselves or humans trying to help them. Some horses end up being euthanised. It was reported in the media last year that the British Horse Society had received 1,120 reports of incidents involving fireworks in the last 12 years, including 42 horse fatalities and 75 human injuries¹. This is believed to only represent one in ten of such incidents.

Farmed and wild animals are similarly affected and can additionally be injured afterwards by debris from fireworks, or mistakenly consume it.

There are mitigation measures that people take to try to minimise the impact of fireworks, such as keeping animals indoors and trying to block out the sounds. These are only partially effective; most animals' hearing is more sensitive than humans, and if fireworks are loud and close, they can cause distress even if all possible precautions have been taken. Also, such measures are only possible if the timing of the fireworks is known, as is the case with public displays. Private displays are difficult or impossible to plan for, as they are frequent and unpredictable at certain times of year.

As such, a city-wide FCZ would be immensely beneficial, helping to prevent fear and distress for many animals. We understand that individual FCZs for certain areas are also being considered. This would not protect animals in other parts of Edinburgh. It would also not be entirely effective within those zones, as the sounds of fireworks going off nearby would still be heard. Given the density of animals (and people vulnerable to the effects of fireworks) within a city, a city-wide FCZ is justified and the best way to protect animals and people. We fully support the proposal for Edinburgh and hope that other cities may follow suit.

¹ [Why are some animals euthanised after fireworks? - BBC News](#)