Supporting Evidence
Hartlepool Borough Council
Innovator in Animal Welfare – CAWF Awards 2014 – Borough and District Councils Section

Hartlepool Borough Council – Illegally Grazed Horses Project

Introduction
From 2010 to 2013 Hartlepool saw a huge escalation in the number of illegally grazed horses in the borough. In early 2013, the RSPCA estimated the resident fly-grazed horse population to be as high as 200 horses at once.

The number of calls from concerned members of the public to the council, police and animal welfare organisations had also risen to a crisis level; immediate action had to be taken, both to protect the horses and also in the interests of public safety. The final catalysts for action were the deaths of several horses in Hartlepool over Christmas 2012, whose carcasses were left for the local authority to deal with; and the high profile tethering of 7 horses on a site in the centre of a residential area earmarked for development by our social housing provider which were preventing work taking place.

Photo of dead horse left for the local authority to remove (l) and horse dumped in the garden of an empty property (r)

During 2013 Cleveland Police dealt with a total of 1880 incidents involving equine issues of which 630 occurred in Hartlepool. Predominantly these were public nuisance, dangerous riding/driving, and stray horses on or near to the road.

In addition, the RSPCA had identified Hartlepool as a particular problem area for horse welfare. In 2013 the RSPCA responded to 170 equine welfare incidents in Hartlepool alone, involving a total of 397 horses. These incidents ranged from concerns about the practice of tethering through to extremely serious cases of neglect. During 2013, 53 horses were seized by the RSPCA on welfare grounds and some of these cases led to successful prosecutions. Unfortunately in many others, ownership of the horse(s) could not be proven.
**Our Approach**
In February 2013 a number of partner organisations came together for an emergency response meeting. This included local authority officers, police, RSPCA, local landowners and local housing associations. This working group established roles and responsibilities and set up immediate response protocols for dealing with the critical situation at that time (see attached). From this initial meeting a longer term strategy to stop the practice of illegal grazing in the borough was developed.

**Strategy**
The *Illegally Grazed Horse Strategy* was endorsed by Hartlepool Borough Council’s Neighbourhood Services Committee in August 2013 (see attached) and laid out our aims and objectives, as well as an action plan of how these would be met.

*Front cover of the Illegally Grazed Horse Strategy*
Aims and Objectives

We had two aims for the project:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aims</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>To reduce stray, tethered and nuisance horses in Hartlepool</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Prevent any further reoccurrences of this activity by adopting “zero tolerance” approach</td>
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These strategic aims had the following objectives:

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<th>Objectives</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Identify and record all tethered and nuisance horses in Hartlepool including owner details where possible</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Provide a fast response service to locate and remove horses from Council land</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Respond to reports of stray, distressed or nuisance horses from the public and partner agencies within one working day</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Support land owners/managers within the town in tackling fly grazing on private land</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Support partner agencies and internal partners to pursue convictions under the Animal Welfare Act 2006</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Develop a media strategy to communicate the Council’s zero tolerance approach to stray, tethered and nuisance horses, as well as horse care and animal welfare messages</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Investigate potential for a licensed grazing scheme to provide grazing land for horse owners</td>
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Partnership Working and Training

Cleveland Police

At the beginning of the project, council staff and the police were being called upon to respond to stray and tethered horses on an increasingly frequent basis. As this was a new development, both council staff and the police officers on the ground had little or no experience of handling horses. This presented a serious potential safety risk to staff handling the horses, particularly as this was often done in stressful circumstances. In order to mitigate this risk and to deal with situations calmly, safely and in a controlled manner (to the benefit of the horses and our staff) it was agreed that training was urgently required. Cleveland Police’s Mounted Section offered us the use of their horses and facilities for a training day. Officers from the Mounted Section provided training in understanding horse behaviour and body language as well as practical tasks to such as putting on a headcollar, leading and tying up.

The police are also very supportive in terms of assisting council staff to impound illegally grazed horses and to safely remove stray animals from the highway; as well as with information and intelligence sharing.
Photos from the training session for police officers and Council staff hosted by Cleveland Police’s mounted section
**RSPCA**  
The RSPCA also provided a training session for us on identifying welfare issues including carrying out a body condition score, scanning for micro chips and common ailments and injuries. A successful and mutually beneficial partnership has grown from this project between the Council and the local RSPCA inspectors. Using this training, council staff are able to respond to reports received by our contact centre of welfare issues and are able to make an initial assessment of whether an emergency response is required. If this is the case then we have the benefit of knowing a local RSPCA contact that will attend promptly when we find something that needs immediate assistance.

*Photos showing training session delivered by RSPCA inspector Balderston*

**Local Landowners**  
We also offer support for local landowners to help them deal with horses on their land. We have devised a schedule of rates and template contract which can be supplied on request. As part of our service we will undertake all monitoring and enforcement activities on their land, liaise with the police and animal welfare organisations on their behalf, post notices and organise bailiff services where required. As it is in all our interests that private sites are not allowed to become “dumping grounds” for horses moved on from council land this service is offered at cost price. We are currently contracted by local social housing providers and the owners of several industrial estates to provide this service.

**Council Teams**  
We also work with other council teams including the revenues and benefits section and where we have evidence that horse trading is being carried out by residents who are in receipt of benefits we will forward the information on to the benefit fraud team. Equally, where the owners of nuisance horses are found to be social housing tenants or where tenants are keeping horses in the gardens of social housing properties, our close relationship with the housing provider means that we can take a joint approach. This could include enforcement under their tenancy agreement with regard to the keeping of animals and/or anti-social behaviour as well as the possibility of having their horse seized.

Management of the allotment service is within the same council team as the tethered horses project which means we have been able to avoid the horses simply being moved onto allotment sites.
The aim of this kind of holistic working is to keep the pressure up on horse owners to make fly grazing less attractive.

*Photos showing loose horses straying onto a building site on Tees Rd (left) and horses tethered on a public footpath on Old Cemetery Rd (right)*

**Monitoring and Evaluation of Risk**

**Horse Surveys**

From the start we wanted to take a zero-tolerance approach to illegal grazing and to work towards a situation where this was eradicated from the borough. The first action of the new project was to undertake a survey of all tethered and illegally grazed horses. Initially this was planned to just take in Council land, but we soon realised that in order to get a true picture of the number of horses and their movements about the town, we would need to include those grazing illegally on private land too. We continually monitor known fly grazing sites so we can spot any new horses shortly after they appear.

Each horse is photographed (left side, right side and front), scanned for micro chip and given a unique ID form (see attached). Where known, owner details are recorded along with any actual or potential welfare concerns (i.e. the level of risk for the horse and the public including condition of horse, whether located near road, state of the land, etc.). This information is freely shared (within data protection guidelines where personal information is concerned) with our partner agencies, particularly the RSPCA, British Horse Society and Cleveland Police.

*Council officer recording a horse’s identification sheet*
This allows us to plot individual horse’s movements, record change of ownership (where known), monitor the horse’s condition (including any deterioration) and provide this log as evidence, if required, in support of any prosecution under the Animal Welfare Act. It also allows us to check at-a-glance if any particular horse is new to the town, which gives us an idea of the scale of influx of new horses.

Malnourished horse discovered on Council land

Seizure Procedure
Within 24-48 hours of illegally grazed horses appearing on Council land the horse will be recorded on an ID sheet and we will post a “notice of intent” (see attached). This informs owners that the grazing of horses is not allowed on that site and requires the horse/s to be removed immediately. In most cases the horse is removed by its owner, but if not then we have a contract with an RSPCA approved equine bailiff to remove the horse/s (our bailiff is also used by the local RSPCA to seize horses that they are impounding on welfare grounds). The horse will then be held for up to 14 days to allow the owner chance to reclaim it.

Photo showing an illegally tethered pony with the notice of intent in situ
At the time of removal a “horse seizure form” is completed which records the time, date and location the horse was seized from, the reason for seizure and details of the horse (see below). This is clipped to its ID sheet along with photos so the horse can be identified and accounted for at every stage of the process. The final outcome is also recorded, such as reclaimed, put to sleep, or gifted for rehoming. A “previously tethered” notice is left on site (see attached).

**Scanned example ID sheet for one horse – showing its progress being monitored as it moved around privately owned sites in the town before finally being seized, unclaimed and then rehomed**

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**Table showing the number of horses seized by Hartlepool Council and their outcomes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of horses seized</th>
<th>Reclaimed by owner</th>
<th>Gifted for rehoming</th>
<th>Euthanised</th>
<th>Died</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 2013 to April 2014</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2014 to May 2014</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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**Education**

We have also tried very hard to engage with the local horse owning community and have achieved a good level of success with this. By being a visible presence on “hot spot” sites and getting to know individual owners we have been able to build a rapport with a number of important horse people. This has proved extremely valuable in identifying owners of particular horses, getting tip-offs, and having the phone numbers of people that can be called upon in an emergency.

We have recognised that many of the problems with these horses come from ignorance and have tried hard to educate owners. We have given advice to owners and have also run a gelding clinic and 2 micro chipping clinics (funded by the local RSPCA branch). These were very well attended with 16 horses being gelded and 41 micro chipped. As well as giving us the chance to identify owners, they also had the opportunity to speak to the vet and RSPCA equine welfare officer and get their questions answered.

*Poster advertising the equine clinics*
We also aim to educate the public. We have produced a webpage ([www.hartlepool.gov.uk/tetheredhorses](http://www.hartlepool.gov.uk/tetheredhorses)) which outlines what the issues are and offers the answers to some frequently asked questions. We have tried to give an understanding of what the council does to tackle the problem and allay some concerns, but also to raise awareness of when horses do need intervention and how members of the public can report this.

**Screen shot of tethered horses webpage**

![Screen shot of tethered horses webpage](image)

**Outcomes**

The project was intended to resolve the problem and has now entered a “maintenance” phase where we monitor sites and respond if, and when, required. From time to time horses appear to “test the water” but swiftly move on when we post our warning notices. We are still prepared, however, to back these up with enforcement action if this proves not to be the case as we accept that once owners realise notices will not be enforced they very quickly become ineffective.

The monitoring and surveying of the illegally grazed horses is an ongoing process and since March 2013, a total of over 170 individual horses have been identified. This is a running total; the current resident population of tethered horses is estimated at around 30 horses. These are all grazing on private land, mainly with the consent of the landowner.

The project has been very well received by the public, members, the police and animal welfare groups. We have also been supported by our local press who have helped us to raise the profile of the plight of these horses and the work that has been carried out (see attached press releases/mail articles).

Through this project we have developed close links with the local police which has been of huge benefit, both to this project and also in other areas of environmental enforcement work. Our pro-active approach...
and constant monitoring of the horses has also been very warmly received by our local RSPCA inspectors and local British Horse Society welfare officer.

**Examples of successful RSPCA prosecutions involving horses in Hartlepool**

- In Oct 2013 a male was sentenced to a 12 month community order with 80hrs unpaid work, £500 costs, £60 victim surcharge for neglecting a horse. He was disqualified from keeping equines for 5yrs.
- In Sept 2013 a female was found guilty of neglecting a horse. She was sentenced to 12 weeks imprisonment suspended for 12 months, disqualified from keeping all animals for 10yrs. She also had to pay £200 costs and £80 victim surcharge.
- In Oct 2013 a male received an immediate 18-week custodial sentence and was banned for 10yrs, from keeping all animals, for life.

This pony was found by Council officers tethered in his harness in an extremely distressed state. He was unable to put his head down to reach the grass or to drink. Veterinary tests of dehydration levels estimated that the pony had not had access to water for 3 days. The owner was successfully prosecuted.

**Next Steps**

One of our objectives was to investigate the potential for a licensed grazing scheme in Hartlepool. The intention is to both provide an alternative to tethering by providing a suitable “free-run” site and also to install legitimate and licensed tenants on fly grazing hot spot sites rather than having invitingly open spaces.

These licences will have terms and conditions relating to the welfare of the horses and the care of the site. We are aiming to have the pilot in place by September 2014.
List of appendices

1. Response protocols
2. Illegally grazed horse strategy document
3. Blank horse identification sheet
4. “Notice of intent” warning notice
5. “Previously tethered” notice
6. “Horses removed by bailiffs” article
Illegally Grazed Horse Procedure

Report received of illegally grazed horse/s

Private land

Advise landowner and offer support. If offer accepted then draw up a contract and proceed as for Council land

Is it...?

Council land

Can the owner be identified?

Yes

Contact owner and instruct them to remove the horse

Horse removed?

Yes

Horse suitable for sale/rehoming

Horse passported and micro chipped ready for “gifting”, sale or rehoming

No

Implement seizure procedure

Horse removed

Post “notice of intent”

Horse assessed

Horse not suitable for sale/rehoming

Horse destroyed and disposed of in accordance with regulations

No

Contact equine bailiff for uplift

Is the land owned by the Council?

Yes

Advise landowner and offer support. If offer accepted then draw up a contract and proceed as for Council land

No

Horses corralled in the nearest safe place - liaise with HBC

Highway

Contact Police who will respond to animals on the highway

Is it...?
Appendix 1

Procedure for Responding to Report of Horse Welfare Concerns/in Distress

Report received to Contact Centre of horse/s welfare concern

Dead
Classed as “Fallen Stock”

Send HBC officer to scan for micro chip or to record description

Record details in the dead animal log in case owner comes forward later

Is it...?

A non-emergency e.g. no water/no blanket, etc.

An emergency /in distress e.g. ill, injured, etc.

Send enforcement team to assess: Is it a danger to itself/public e.g. loose on road

Enforcement team to inspect. If a welfare issue is identified then forward to RSPCA to action. Otherwise monitor - possible education opportunity with the BHS

Is it on Council land?

No

Inform land owner that they must remove the horse. HBC can do it for a charge

Yes

HBC to remove. Must be removed without delay to an approved premises e.g. crematorium or knacker yard

Report to Police if loose on highway - liaise with HBC

If the horse is trapped, injured or involved in an accident report it to the RSPCA on 0300 123 999

End of procedure

Follow illegally grazed horse procedure

Hand over to RSPCA emergency response team

If on HBC land follow the procedure for illegally grazed horses

Action
Option
Outcome
Appendix 1

Out of Hours Procedure for Responding to Loose Horse or Report of Horse Welfare Concerns/in Distress

Report received to Richard Court of loose horse or horse/s welfare concern

Dead Classed as “Fallen Stock”

Is it...?

Running loose on or near the Highway

Is it an emergency (e.g. distressed/ill/injured)?

Yes

End of procedure

No

Record details in the dead animal log in case owner comes forward later

Out of Hours officer to scan for micro chip or to record description

Corral horse in nearest safe place

The horse is not showing signs of injury/distress and is securely contained but may have concern e.g. no water/no blanket, etc.. Record details and pass to Helen Beaman to action on next working day.

If no safe place is available contact the approved equine bailiff to collect the horse

If the horse is trapped, injured or involved in an accident report it to the RSPCA on 0300 123 999

Hand over to RSPCA emergency response team

Out of Hours officer to scan for micro chip or to record description

Dead Classed as “Fallen Stock”

Is it...?

A welfare concern

Record details in the dead animal log in case owner comes forward later

Running loose on or near the Highway

Corral horse in nearest safe place

If no safe place is available contact the approved equine bailiff to collect the horse

End of procedure

Inform land owner that they must remove the horse. HBC can do it for a charge

HBC to remove. Must be removed without delay to an approved premises e.g. crematorium or knacker yard

End of procedure

Is it on Council land?

Yes

No
Hartlepool Borough Council

Illegally Grazed Horse Strategy

2013
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Introduction

In recent years, loose, stray, abandoned and fly grazed horses have become an acute and expensive problem for landowners, local authorities, enforcement agencies, welfare charities and tax payers across the UK. It is increasingly clear that this practice is causing welfare problems, blighting public spaces and posing difficulties for landowners and the public, creating a problem to which there is not a simple solution,

Fly grazing refers to the practice of placing a horse or horses on land to graze without the permission of the landowner.

Horses are usually, but not always, tethered with ropes or chains to prevent them from roaming. Traditionally they were located in derelict and industrial sites, but in recent years have also been found in residential and amenity areas.

Hartlepool like many North East authorities has a long history of illegal or “fly grazed” horses, but in the past three years this practice has increased dramatically; a trend which is mirrored nationally.

The two main factors believed to be causing this increase in fly grazing seems to be economics and over breeding. The continued poor economic climate has meant that not only has the price of horses dropped significantly, making them cheaper to purchase, but with less money available more people are fly grazing to avoid expensive livery fees. Despite the drop in value of horses, many breeders continue to breed and import horses, meaning that in the UK there is a substantial surplus of horses, ensuring prices remain low.

A survey of Council land in April 2013 identified that there were 105 individual horses on Council land; however, an earlier survey by the RSPCA estimated that there were over 150 of these horses across the borough on council and private land.

Across the UK reports of fly grazing have increased dramatically in the past 3 years and this trend has been followed by an almost fourfold increase in abandoned horses and welfare cases.

Hartlepool Borough Council and partner organisations such as the police and RSPCA have received large numbers of complaints from members of the public concerned about the welfare of these horses and the potential dangers of them roaming onto the highway or by being ridden recklessly.

In the past 12 months Cleveland Police have dealt with a total of 1880 incidents involving equine issues, predominantly inappropriate use and nuisance riding, stray animals on the road or un-tethered animals adjacent to roads and potential for straying on roads. Of these 630 were in Hartlepool.
The RSPCA have identified that there are particular horse welfare problems in Hartlepool, which is evidenced by the fact that they have seized over thirty horses between January and August 2013. They have a number of pending prosecutions for animal cruelty and have successfully prosecuted one horse owner who received a lifetime ban on keeping all animals; this person also received a suspended prison sentence and a substantial fine.

In early 2013 the council received regular requests for assistance from partner organisations such as the police when dealing with loose horses on the highway, and Hartlepool Borough Council as a land owner became increasingly concerned about the potential liability faced if these animals caused an accident after escaping from Council owned land.

In February 2013, Hartlepool Borough Council along with other local authorities and partner organisations in the North East of England decided to try to work together to tackle the escalating equine crisis in the region and formed the North East Equine Group.

Here in Hartlepool in March 2013, a local collective of partners including the local authority, police, RSPCA and local land owners set up a working group to try and deliver an informed, coordinated, effective and holistic approach to tackle the immediate issues associated with the tethered horse problem and to develop a longer term strategy and action plan for the future.

It is hoped that by taking clear decisive action and making it clear that the practice of illegal fly grazing is not acceptable in Hartlepool, the problem will be eliminated.

Photo copyright RSPCA
Problems caused by stray/tethered horses in Hartlepool

**Welfare Issues**
Tethering is not illegal in itself, however, it is not recommended as a method of containing horses for more than brief periods (hours rather than days). Horses that are tethered for extended periods will not be able to exercise or exhibit natural behaviour. They will also not be able to escape from predators or human tormentors. There have been reports of horses in Hartlepool having anti-freeze poured over them and of youths filming each other punching and kicking tethered horses.

They are also regularly reported as being left with no grass/hay or water and many don’t wear rugs in the winter time despite being tethered in exposed locations.

There is also risk of injury caused by the tether chain being caught up or the horse becoming tangled in it. A horse was recently found dead in Redcar after its chain became wrapped around a lamp post. Severe injuries are also caused by the collar, either from being too tight or from the carrying of the weight of the collar on the sensitive poll joint.

Some of the horses are used for breeding, either deliberately or accidentally, which increases the number of horses potentially being placed on council land and also raises further welfare concerns.

The horses’ welfare must be considered paramount at each stage of the process through to the end result. In light of the recent horse-meat scandals steps must also be taken to ensure that these horses do not enter the food chain.
Adverse possession of land
If a person occupies land they do not own on occasion there may be circumstances where claims for ownership can be pursued

Road Safety
There is a risk of tethered horses getting loose and being involved in road traffic accidents. Many of these horses are tethered near to busy roads such as at the B&Q site, Brenda Road which is directly adjacent to the A689 as it passes through Hartlepool.

Violence and Intimidation from Owners
Officers dealing with tethered horses need to be aware of the possibility of threats of violence and intimidation from owners. Private landowners and farmers trying to remove horses are often the victims of threats of violence and arson. Residents remonstrating with horse owners have also been verbally abused and threatened.

A risk assessment has been provided for officers dealing with horses (appendix 1).

Potential Liability
Tethered horses have been known to kick or bite passers-by, cause road accidents. Accidents caused to members of the public on council land could incur costly pay-outs. Repairs to local amenities such as to fencing or grass surfaces (e.g. on sports pitches) could also be substantial.
Impact on the Visual Amenity of Hartlepool

Tethered horses have a detrimental impact on the appearance of the town, which contributes towards the social decline of communities. Resident complaints include the feeling that the horses “make it feel like living in a shanty town” or that Hartlepool is becoming like “the Wild West”.

There have also been complaints from local businesses that when important international clients come to visit premises they have to try to explain why there are horses everywhere, not to mention churned up grass, mud and horse manure. When a great deal of time, effort and money are being put into bringing business to Hartlepool it is important that the town is presented in the right way.

Ownership/traceability

The Horse Passport Regulations (England) 2009 state that all horses and ponies should have a passport and be micro chipped. It is anticipated, however, that the majority of these horses will not be micro chipped and so establishing an owner will prove difficult. If the Council wishes to transport or sell any unclaimed horses they must provide it with a passport and micro chip before it can be moved or sold, which has a further cost implication for each animal the Council wishes to sell.

Unfortunately there is no specific legislation at present which deals with the fly grazing problem and therefore relevant authorities have to address each situation individually in order to decide which is the most appropriate legislative tool to use and how to make sure that individuals can be made accountable.

The Horse Passport Regulations (England) 2009 state that all horses and ponies should have a passport and be micro chipped. Whilst most responsible horse owners may adhere to this requirement, unfortunately weaknesses in the enforcement of this legislation have led to a position where those who carry out the practice of illegal grazing also flout this legislation. This has led to the majority of the illegally grazed horses not being micro chipped, or on the occasions that they are, then almost always the details on the microchips are out of date. This makes proving ownership, and responsibility, in these instances almost impossible.
Legislation

The Animal Welfare Act 2006 places a responsibility on the landowner to ensure the welfare of any animals left on their land once they are aware of their presence. This legislation can also be used (generally by the RSPCA) if the horses have welfare problems or if a vet determines that they are likely to suffer if their circumstances do not change. As stated previously, over thirty illegally grazed horses have been seized by the RSPCA in Hartlepool under this legislation since January 2013.

The Animals Act 1971, is a civil law that landowners must follow if horses stray onto their land. This gives landowners the right to detain a horse as long as this fact is reported to the police within 48 hours and to the owner (if known). Following detention, the landowner may claim any damages caused by the animal or any reasonable expenses incurred whilst detaining the animal. After 14 days the landowner may sell the animal at market or by public auction or otherwise dispose of the animal in accordance with relevant legislation.

The escape of horses onto the highway may be covered by the Highways Act 1980 Section 55.

The police in Hartlepool have also been tackling some of the anti-social behavioural linked elements of this practice, such as the reckless riding or driving of the tethered horse using a variety of legislative instruments including:

- Highways Act 1835 (S72) – which makes it an offence to wilfully ride, lead, drive or tether a horse/horse drawn carriage on a footpath.
- Town Police Clauses Act 1847 (S28) Driving a carriage/riding a horse in a street furiously to the obstruction, annoyance endangering of residents/passengers.
- Horses (Protective Headgear for young riders) Act 1990 – makes it an offence to cause or permit a child under 14 to ride on a road without protective headgear.

In Wales, new legislative powers are to be introduced in the early Autumn to tackle the problem caused by difficulties in identifying horse owners and irresponsible ownership, a decision supported by the major animal welfare charities who are lobbying for such changes to take place in England.

Although there is a requirement to make legislative changes at a national level, local forums such as the North East Equine Group have a part to play in lobbying for these changes and also looking at a local level through imaginative solutions such as ASBOs and byelaws.

Hampshire County Council passed a byelaw which allowed all Hampshire Districts to take action with regard to horses on their land. The Hampshire Act 1983, allows the district councils to seize any horses on its land. It also allows the councils to recover costs from the owner if they come forward.
STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTNERS

The strategy will be led by the Council’s Environmental Action team and delivered with involvement from the following:

- Animal licensing/trading standards section
- Economic development section
- Cleveland Police
- RSPCA
- British Horse Society
- North East Equine Group (regional working group comprising representatives from local councils, animal welfare organisations and local police)
- Horse owners

Understanding the scale of the problem

In order to gain an understanding of the scale of the problem “mapping” exercises have been carried out from April 2013. A horse inspection sheet has been developed (appendix 2) to identify and track the movements of individual horses. Each animal is photographed front and side and details of the condition of the horse and its location are recorded, along with owner details if known.

To date, 105 individual horses have been identified but this is ongoing as a number of these animals have recently “disappeared” from the area and been replaced with new horses. It is not known whether this is the result of horse trading amongst established owners or whether new owners are coming onto the scene.
A Phased Approach

The horses are mainly located in the north and coastal area of the town. In order to tackle the problem effectively a phased approach has been introduced:

Phase 1
The area north of West View Road – includes the “hot spot” areas of King Oswy Field, Spion Kop nature reserve and Bruntoft Avenue. On April 29th 2013, 5 horses were uplifted from this area after their owners failed to remove them when warning notices were issued.
Phase 2
The area between West View Road and Station Lane – includes the “hot spot” areas of the Oakesway industrial estate, Coronation Drive and the area adjacent to Brenda Road known as the “slag banks”. After notices were posted during May/June all horses were cleared from this area so no animals were uplifted.

Phase 3
Recap of areas previously targeted to ensure no new horses have been brought onto those sites. Also monitor the area south of Station Lane. This area does not have any particular “hot spots” but occasional horses have been sighted in this area and had notices served on them.
Progress So Far

In March 2013 responsibility for dealing with the stray and tethered horses and the task of developing a strategy to deal with this issue was passed to the Waste and Environmental Services section of the Council in order to utilise skills and experience from its Dog Warden Service and Environmental Enforcement Team.

The need for an immediate, coordinated and holistic approach to resolve this problem was identified, and accordingly a ‘working partnership’ was developed which included Council Officers from a number of departments (including animal licensing, economic development and estates), the police, RSPCA and local landowners.

The following actions were taken in order to deal with a wide scale and escalating problem:

- Local authority and police worked together to develop a number of ‘response protocols’ to establish responsibility and actions required in various scenarios.
- Local authority and police undertook comprehensive mapping exercise to establish the location, the magnitude and the nature of the problems which existed.
- Local authority and police teams trained in ‘horse awareness and handling’ in order that a safe, reactive and informed response could be delivered.
- Local authority and police teams trained in basic ‘animal welfare assessment’ by the RSPCA in order that they could identify problems and if necessary support the RSPCA in responding to reports within the borough.
- Problem ‘hotspots’ were identified and a phased approach was taken to tackle the issue in selected areas in order to maximise the use of resources (i.e. staff and equipment).
- Consultation was carried out to seek advice from other local authorities who were experiencing similar problems and the council joined the regional ‘North East Equine’ group which was set up in February 2013 in response to similar issues in the region.
# Outcomes

## Phase 1
**Area north of West View Road**
- 22 horses were mapped and identified in this area.
- “Notices of Intent” (see appendix 2) were developed and posted for each horse. These instruct the owners to remove the horses immediately or face them being seized.
- 17 horses were removed by their owners from the target areas, 5 horses remained and were seized by equine bailiffs and the police in a ‘swoop and seize’ operation.

## Phase 2
**West View Road to Station Lane**
- 77 horses mapped and identified in target area
- Horses mapped also included from a number of partner land owners (PD Ports, Sovereign).
- Partners advised on rights and responsibilities and both PD Ports and Sovereign adapted the signage that HBC used and erected notices of intent.
- All but one horse removed from HBC land and from private land where ‘notices of intent’ had been posted
- Information shared with police and RSPCA
- Oakesway Industrial Estate (30 horses alone) advised of their rights and responsibilities and the offer of partnership action has been made. To date, Oakesway have failed to take action (as they state that cost is prohibitive) and there remain approximately 30 horses on this site.
- 2 horses seized by the RSPCA on welfare grounds
- 1 horse remaining (which also had considerable welfare issues) was seized by equine bailiffs on behalf of HBC.

## Phase 3
**Area south of Station Lane and recap of areas 1 and 2**
- Monitor cleared areas. Revisit areas in Phases 1 & 2 to ensure that horses do not return.
- Reactive response to issues such as escaped horses
- Set up task force to tackle issues at Oakesway Industrial Estate.
Aims and Objectives

In order to successfully tackle the problem of stray and tethered horses in Hartlepool it is important to set out a number of strategic aims and objectives. The overall aims of the strategy are to:

• Reduce/eliminate stray, tethered and nuisance horses in Hartlepool
• Prevent any future reoccurrences of this activity by adopting a “zero tolerance” approach

Theses strategic aims will be met with the following objectives:-

(1) Identify and record all tethered and nuisance horses in Hartlepool including owner details where possible.

(2) Provide a fast response service to locate and remove horses from Council land.

(3) Respond to reports of stray, distressed or nuisance horses from the public and partner agencies within one working day.

(4) Support landowners/managers within the town in tackling fly-grazing on private land.

(5) Support partner agencies and internal partners to pursue convictions under the Animal Welfare Act 2006

(6) Develop a media strategy to communicate the council’s zero tolerance approach to stray, tethered and nuisance horses, as well as horse care and animal welfare messages.

(7) Investigate potential for a licensed grazing scheme to provide grazing land for horse owners.
Strategy: Action Plan

**Objective 1 - Identify and record all tethered and nuisance horses in Hartlepool including owner details where possible**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop identification sheet and procedure to record details of individual horses and owners</td>
<td>complete (appendix 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locate, “map”, photograph and record details for each horse</td>
<td>ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a database to record this information</td>
<td>ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop an information sharing protocol to enable this information to be shared between Council departments and external partners</td>
<td>April 2014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Objective 2 - Provide a fast response service to locate and remove horses from Council land**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop procedures for responding to reports of horses on Council land and for removing the horses</td>
<td>complete (appendix 3 and 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigate the use of anti social behaviour legislation to tackle owners of illegally grazed or nuisance horses</td>
<td>ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigate animal transport legislation and the practicalities involved to potentially impound and remove the horses in-house</td>
<td>complete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compile a response kit containing head collars and lead ropes, horse treats, buckets and useful contact numbers</td>
<td>complete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop signage and stakes to post “notices of intention” adjacent to illegally tethered horses</td>
<td>complete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract a professional horse bailiff company to uplift those horses not removed by their owners after the notices are posted</td>
<td>December 2013.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide basic horse awareness and handling training for all officers working with horses</td>
<td>complete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide a comprehensive risk assessment for officers working with horses</td>
<td>complete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor sites where horses are known to have been kept to ensure a fast response should they re-appear or be replaced</td>
<td>ongoing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Objective 3 - Respond to reports of stray, distressed or nuisance horses from the public and partner agencies within one working day

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop a procedure for responding to reports of welfare concerns about horses</td>
<td>complete (appendix 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liaise with partner organisations including the Police and the RSPCA to refer welfare cases where necessary</td>
<td>ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide basic welfare awareness training for all officers working with horses</td>
<td>complete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure that equine bailiff contract includes provision for dealing with emergency situations and veterinary provision.</td>
<td>December 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify and engage with land owners/ managers to enable an effective response if/when required.</td>
<td>April 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set up contractual agreements with private landowners (including a schedule of rates for call outs and for dealing with incidents and arranging bailiff services on private land).</td>
<td>Dec 2013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Objective 4 - Support landowners/managers within the town in tackling fly-grazing on private land

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Correspond with all relevant local landowners/managers outlining their rights and responsibilities with regard to fly-grazed horses and offering advice on practical action that can be taken to make their site less attractive to fly grazers</td>
<td>complete (appendix 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support private landowners/managers by providing expert knowledge and contractable services to enable them to deal with this problem on their land.</td>
<td>Dec 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invite landowners/managers to join the Hartlepool equine working group</td>
<td>ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share template signs, warnings and response protocols for dealing with horses for use on their land</td>
<td>ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigate alternative approaches for bringing landowners/ managers on board to encourage a more proactive attitude</td>
<td>ongoing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Objective 5 - Support partner agencies and internal partners to pursue convictions under the Animal Welfare Act 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop an information sharing protocol to enable information to be shared between Council departments and external partners</td>
<td>to be completed by April 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide statements and other evidence when required to the Police and RSPCA</td>
<td>ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refer welfare cases to the RSPCA or other welfare organisations where necessary</td>
<td>ongoing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Objective 6 - Develop a media strategy to communicate the Council’s zero tolerance approach to stray, tethered and nuisance horses. Provide animal welfare information and advice to horse owners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liaise with press officers from the Council, Police and RSPCA to develop a procedure and key messages for responding to publicity around tethered horses</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a timetable for press releases and other media outlets on various horse issues</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write a webpage for the Council’s website to state the Council’s approach to dealing with stray, tethered and nuisance horses including links to contact information for the Police and welfare organisations</td>
<td>complete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply for funding of £5,000 from the RSPCA to fund a veterinary clinic to offer micro chipping, passporting and castration in order to make it easier for current owners to move their horses into legitimate livery facilities.</td>
<td>complete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liaise with the RSPCA and British Horse Society to run a microchipping, passporting and gelding event effectively and safely.</td>
<td>Events to be held on 29th October and 5th November 2013.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop or compile responsible horse ownership displays and literature to hand out at the event.</td>
<td>To be completed by Nov 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use the event to liaise with owners to identify which horses they own and update contact details</td>
<td>To be completed by Nov 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castrate and micro chip as many horses as possible</td>
<td>To be completed by Nov 13.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate the event and, if effective, investigate whether similar events can be run in future</td>
<td>To be completed by Nov 13.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Objective 7 - Investigate potential for a licensed grazing scheme to provide grazing land for horse owners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Locate potential sites that could be used for grazing and assess for suitability</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liaise with the Council’s estate’s and planning departments regarding relevant permissions to use land for grazing</td>
<td>ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a grazing licence agreement with terms and conditions for licensees</td>
<td>ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If required, investigate costs for making potential sites stock-proof (e.g. fencing, gates, etc.)</td>
<td>ongoing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 1 - Risk Assessment

**Contents**

- What this Risk Assessment covers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENTS - WHAT THIS RISK ASSESSMENT COVERS</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Introduction to the risk assessment.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Overview of risk factors.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Identification of hazards.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Assessment of control measures.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Action plan.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Review and update.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Control Reference</th>
<th>RA Req No:</th>
<th>RA Req Ref:</th>
<th>RA Req Description:</th>
<th>RA Req Location:</th>
<th>RA Req Purpose:</th>
<th>RA Req Date:</th>
<th>RA Req Purpose:</th>
<th>RA Req Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Important Notice - All Employees Should:**

1. Take care to ensure that their activities do not put others at risk.
2. Ensure the use of appropriate PPE is used.
3. Understand the risk factors and take appropriate action.
4. Follow approved systems of work laid down for their safety.
5. Keep work area clean and tidy.
6. Notify the supervisor if any hazard is identified.

Risk Assessment

Dealing with identified hazards on Council owned land.

Paul Hunwood

Review Date: 03/02/2014

Work Site: Various

Production: 03/02/2013

Date of Risk Assessment
### Performing Checks

Before any Non-Derogatory Veterinary Examination can be administered:

- The animal should be restrained in a manner that allows for a thorough examination.
- The condition of the horse's eyes, ears, nose, and mouth should be assessed.
- The heart rate and respiratory rate should be monitored.
- The body condition score should be recorded.
- The horse should be observed for any signs of distress or discomfort.

### Precautions (Controls) to be applied when undertaking work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Precautions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example 1</td>
<td>Measure body condition score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example 2</td>
<td>Ensure the horse is not distressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example 3</td>
<td>Restrict movement as necessary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Significance

- Medium
- High
- Low
- Safe

### Personal Protective Equipment

- Head protection
- Eye protection
- Mouth protection
- Hand protection

### Scene Plan

- Location
- Date
- Time

### Low Risk

- Park the vehicle in accordance with local parking regulations.
- No risk of injury.
- No hazards present.
- Immediate action required.
### Risk Assessment and Guidance Note: Dealing with Tainted Hands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedure (cont'd) to be undertaken when undertaking work</th>
<th>Personal Hygiene - Take the basic personal hygiene precautions to avoid contamination - see below.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>LOW</strong> Risk**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MEDIUM</strong> Risk**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HIGH</strong> Risk**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**A. All operatives should inspect their hands and arms during the operation for any potential contamination.**

**B. Any suspected cases of contamination should be reported to your supervisor/amended.**

**C. Ensure contaminated clothes are stored carefully and away from any food preparation area.**

**D. Do not allow items to touch your skin unless necessary.**

**E. Remove all personal protective equipment and clothes.**

**F. Wash exposed skin thoroughly.**

**G. Non-skin contamination.**

- If possible, first aid is hazardous to health may be encountered on site and treated according to the relevant first aid advice.
11. Officers must take appropriate personal safety precautions as outlined below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk Identification</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Verification &amp; Audit</th>
<th>Risk Mitigation</th>
<th>Action Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Safeguard</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Precautions</td>
<td>(e.g. wear protective clothing)</td>
<td>To be observed when undertaking work</td>
<td>To be followed</td>
<td>To be included in the work environment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Report ALL INCIDENTS - physical and verbal abuse is unacceptable, and will not be tolerated. Report incidents to your supervisory manager and suggest an improvement to your supportive management and support.
- You do not consent and cannot be compelled to raise any claim if you do not wish to remain in the base, and is expected to raise the claim if you leave the base.
- Let your supervisor and colleagues know where you are - Ensure you are familiar with the workplace and know where you are. Ensure you are familiar with the workplace and know where you are. Ensure you are familiar with the workplace and know where you are.
- Ensure a radio or mobile phone - Ensure that you have a radio or mobile phone with you at all times.
- Lay and stretch out the top to lain.
- Trust your instinct - If you feel threatened, leave the area immediately.

- Low
- Medium
- High
- Low

- Personal Safeguard
- To be observed when undertaking work
- To be followed
- To be included in the work environment
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Order</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>A risk assessment should identify all foreseeable risks associated with the task.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>The risks should be prioritised based on their likelihood and severity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Controls should be put in place to mitigate the identified risks.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key to use of colour on this document:**
- Green: Information relevant to the task
- Yellow: Procedures to be followed
- Red: Controls put in place
# Appendix 2 - Horse Identification Sheet

## Horse Visual Inspection Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Notice Served</th>
<th>By (Officer)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Photo ref nos.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Species:
- [ ] Horse/Pony
- [ ] Donkey

### Sex:
- [ ] Mare
- [ ] Gelding
- [ ] Stallion

### Mane falls on:
- [ ] Near side (left)
- [ ] Off side (right)
- [ ] Hogged (shaved)

### Colour:
- [ ] Bay
- [ ] Chestnut
- [ ] Roan
- [ ] Brown
- [ ] Cream
- [ ] Dun
- [ ] Black
- [ ] Piebald
- [ ] Skewbald
- [ ] Grey
- [ ] Palomino
- [ ] Appaloosa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Micro chip Y/N (if yes state no.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rug/tack details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Freezemark/branding details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Owner details if known:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

(tethered or loose, locations/directions, health conditions, access issues etc.):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

(removed after notice posted, arrived from other HBC site, etc.):
Appendix 4 - Procedure for Responding to Welfare Concerns

Procedure for Responding to Report of Horse Welfare Concerns in Distress

1. **Response Team**
   - Risk Assessment
   - Hand over to

2. **Follow the Procedure**
   - If the RSPCA on 0300 123 999
   - Involved in an accident, report it to
   - If the horse is trapped, inform of

3. **Report to Police**
   - If the horse is injured
   - Issue is identified
   - Team to inspect
   - Welfare
   - Not an emergency
   - No water/no blanket, etc.

4. **Inform Local Authority**
   - For microchip
   - Identify'
   - Dead
   - Classified as 'Feral'

5. **End of Procedure**
   - Prior to premises e.g.
   - Loose on highway -
   - Loose on property -

6. **Horse Concern**
   - Removal
   - Must remove the
   - Horse
   - Can delay to in approved

7. **Decision**
   - Forward later
   - Case officer to scan
   - Dead

8. **Communication**
   - Horse
   - Must remove
   - Horse
22nd April 2013

Dear Chief Executive/Land Owner,

**Advice for private landowners dealing with illegally grazed horses**

This letter has been sent to you to inform you of the action that the Council is preparing to take regarding the tethered and illegally grazed horses on its land. We are currently posting notices on sites in the town where horses are known to be grazing. I have enclosed a copy of the notice for your information (feel free to copy the notice if you decide to take similar action). The notices inform horse owners that they must remove their animals as soon as possible. Horses that are not removed by their owners will be impounded and removed by the Council.

It is likely that some of these horses will be removed by their owners and shifted onto privately owned land such as industrial estates. We would like to offer private landowners such as yourself or your company the opportunity to work with the Council to tackle any problems regarding tethered horses that occur on your land.

Unfortunately the legislation available to landowners to deal with illegal grazing of horses on their land is complicated. Whilst some legal powers are available to landowners to tackle the problem, the Animal Welfare Act 2006 places an obligation on landowners to ensure that the horses’ welfare is not compromised.

This letter aims to outline your rights, and also your obligations, as a landowner. If you would like to discuss any matters around tethered horses on your land please contact Helen Beaman on 01429 523358.

When it comes to illegally grazed horses, prevention is easier and cheaper than cure. Check that the fencing around your land is secure and that gates are securely locked. You could even consider barricading gateways to prevent access. Farmers often place immovable objects such as fallen trees, or dig ditches, across gateways to prevent access so you could consider these measures. If your land is not fenced and this is not an option then regular checks are essential as one horse will soon become many if you do not take action immediately. You could consider ploughing up or otherwise removing unused pockets of grassland to prevent it becoming a magnet for fly grazing.

**Landowner’s rights**

You have certain rights under Section 7 of The Animals Act 1971. Where livestock are tethered or grazed on land without the landowner’s permission and are not then under the control of any person they are deemed to be trespassing. The landowner (or their authorised agent) may take action to remove the horses by posting notices and possibly subsequently seizing the animals under provisions in the Act.
Landowner’s obligations
Under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 landowners are legally obliged to ensure that horses left on their land have food and water and cannot stray onto the highway, even if the horses are not your property.

If you have any concerns about the horses’ welfare you need to raise them with the RSPCA on 0300 1234 999, the British Horse Society on 02476 840517 or the Council on 01429 523333.

“Step By Step” action plan
If you do find that there are illegally grazed horses on your land this Step By Step plan will help you to deal with them. Don’t ignore one horse on its own as owners will often tether one horse to “test the water” to see what the reaction is. If you allow one horse to be tethered unchallenged you may find many more suddenly turn up, particularly when they are moved on from other areas.

Keep a record of your actions and also of any costs that you incur. This will help to prove that you acted responsibly should the horse’s owner come forward at a later date.

Step 1
When exercising your rights under the Animals Act you must give notice to the Officer in Charge of a Police Station. When you report the horses to the Police ask for an incident number and keep a note of it for future reference and to include on your notices. You can also ask for the name and collar number of the local beat officer (the Police are under no obligation to provide this but they may do so to help out) to add to your notice.

Step 2
If you can identify the owner you must also give them notice. In practice the easiest way to do this is to display a notice on the land on which they are trespassing. Feel free to copy the enclosed Council notice if you wish to design your own signs. Alternatively, example notices can be downloaded from www.newc.co.uk (go to the search box and type in “abandonment”. This leads to guidelines and sample notices).

Laminate the notices or place in water proof sleeves before attaching them to stakes, fences or gates on the perimeter of your land. If the identity of the owner is known post a copy to their address.

Step 3
Hopefully the horse owners will remove their animals. If not, after 14 days you can legally sell the horse at auction or market. A horse passport and microchip are legally required before the horse is sold. This will typically take 2-3 weeks to put in place – please contact the British Horse Society for arrangements on 02476 840517.

Step 4
If you decide to remove the horses there are companies that can offer an impounding/bailiff service. Those can be found on the internet (search for “horse bailiff” or “equine bailiff”). Their services include posting notices, seizure and subsequent sale/disposal of the animal, including organising the passport and microchip.

If a horse dies on your land they are the landowner’s responsibility if the true owner is not known. The collection of dead horses can be arranged through the Council at a charge (please contact 01429 523333 for more information). Alternatively, J Warren ABP will
collect fallen stock, again for a charge depending on the size of the animal. They can be contacted on 01388 488225

Note: Often the posting of notices will have the desired effect of the horses being moved on, however, this is not always the case and seizure/disposal procedures need to be in place before notices are posted.

Dealing with intimidation and threats of violence
If you feel that you are at risk or are being threatened dial 999. If you have been threatened please report the incident to Cleveland Police on the 101 non-emergency number. Your call will be dealt with in the strictest confidence and can be anonymous. If you are unable to identify the individual responsible a physical description, nick name, accent or vehicle description can all help the Police to identify the offender.

Important Advisory Notice
Please note: if you knowingly release animals onto a highway you will be prosecuted by the Police. You will also be at risk of civil prosecution if injury or damage occurs as a result of your actions.

You are advised to seek independent legal advice with regard to your individual situation. If you would like to discuss problems with tethered horses on your land, or any of the information contained in this letter please contact Helen Beaman on 01429 523358.

Yours sincerely,

Helen Beaman
### Horse Visual Inspection Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<tr>
<th>Notice Served</th>
<th>By (Officer)</th>
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<th>Photo ref nos.</th>
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#### Species:
- [ ] Horse/Pony
- [ ] Donkey

#### Sex:
- [ ] Mare
- [ ] Gelding
- [ ] Stallion

#### Mane falls on:
- [ ] Near side (left)
- [ ] Off side (right)
- [ ] Hogged (shaved)

#### Colour:
- [ ] Bay
- [ ] Chestnut
- [ ] Roan
- [ ] Brown
- [ ] Cream
- [ ] Dun
- [ ] Black
- [ ] Piebald
- [ ] Skewbald
- [ ] Grey
- [ ] Palomino
- [ ] Appaloosa

#### Micro chip Y/N (if yes state no.)

#### Rug/tack details

#### Freezemark/branding details

#### Owner details if known:

#### Other details
(tethered or loose, locations/directions, health conditions, access issues etc.):

#### Notes
(removed after notice posted, arrived from other HBC site, etc.):
Condition of horse:  Good  Fair  Poor
Further information (e.g. underweight, injuries, etc.)

Condition of field/area:  Good  Fair  Poor
Further information (e.g. waterlogged, excess weeds, rubbish, state of fencing, etc.)

Show distinguishing features/injuries on the diagram

Risk Assessment:

Horse’s temperament

Located near path way?  □
Located near road?  □
Located near play area?  □
Animal already had notice served?  □  Details

Any other issues:

Overall Risk:  Low  Medium  High

Proposed Action:  NFA  Removal ASAP  Fwd to RSPCA  Fwd to Police
WARNING OF INTENT

For the Attention of all Horse Owners

This land is owned by Hartlepool Borough Council

The Council does not allow horses to be kept on its land

Any horse found on Council owned land will be subject to impoundment by horse bailiffs without further notification

Please remove your horse IMMEDIATELY
To the Owner (s) of the Animals previously grazed in this location:

16th May 2014

The 2 horses (1 brown and white and 1 black and white) that were grazing on this land without consent have been seized by Hartlepool Borough Council and removed to a safe location.

You are able to reclaim them by contacting 01429 523333. You will be expected to prove ownership of the animal and to pay all costs involved in its seizure.

PLEASE NOTE – IF YOU DO NOT CLAIM THE ANIMAL WITHIN 14 DAYS OF THE DATE OF THIS NOTICE AND PAY ALL OUTSTANDING COSTS INVOLVED IN SEIZURE, THE ANIMAL WILL BE REHOMED
Horses removed by bailiffs

Council take animals away

BY IAN Willis
@HartPoolMail
mail.news@press.co.uk

COUNCIL bosses have removed five horses from land after it was found they were grazing illegally.

Hartlepool Council instructed bailiffs to remove the animals from land near to the B&Q store, off Brenda Road, after the horses strayed onto the road and caused problems with traffic.

They are now being kept at stables where they will remain for 14 days before being re-homed - unless they are reclaimed by their owners.

Hartlepool Council has adopted a zero tolerance approach to illegally grazing horses amid concerns over public safety and animal welfare.

A Hartlepool Council spokeswoman said: "We hope this latest removal of horses will serve as a reminder to the owners of our determination to tackle this problem.

"Horses are often tethered near busy roads and it worries us that they could pose a serious risk to public safety should they break free. Horses have also been known to bite or kick members of the public.

"We also have concerns about the general welfare of many of these illegally grazing horses and the conditions in which they are being kept."

The council is working in partnership with a number of organisations to tackle the problem, including Cleveland Police, the RSPCA and the British Horse Society.

Officials are also concerned at the number of people buying horses as pets, with the spokeswoman adding: "More and more people seem to be getting horses on a whim because they are cheap.

"However, it takes a lot of specialist knowledge to care properly for a horse and many animals end up suffering because owners don’t know how to look after them." People can report a tethered horse to the local authority by ringing (01429) 323333. In an emergency - if a horse is injured or in distress - they should contact the RSPCA on 0300 1234 999.

REGISTER: Entries are open for this year’s Tickled Pink Race for Life.

Last year a staggering £135,000 was raised in Cancer Research UK’s event.

Entries are now open for the 2014 race, which is taking place on the front at Sandhaven Beach, Hartlepool on Saturday, July 6.

Organisers are hoping to make it a sell-out event again for participants and spectators alike, and have set a fundraising target of £175,000.

Holly Howet, Cancer Research UK’s regional events manager, said: "We are keen to build on the fantastic support we have received in previous years."

For more information about Tickled Pink Race for Life or to enter the event visit www.raceforlife.org.uk.