

Investigation Complaints

Where a complaint of noise, smell or flies is made to the Council, we are obliged by law to investigate it under the Environmental Protection Act 1990. In the first instance we would send the complainant a nuisance record sheet and ask them to record the problem.

We would also write to the owner of the birds and ask them to take steps to control the disturbance. Once record sheets are returned to us, if we believe there may be an issue, we will visit to witness the disturbance.

This may be in person or by using recording equipment. If the officer is satisfied that the disturbance constitutes a Statutory Nuisance under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, an Abatement Notice will be served. If this is not complied with, the poultry keeper could be taken to the magistrates court and, if found guilty, face a maximum fine of £5,000.

In reality, legal action is always the last resort and we would seek to work with the poultry keeper, offer advice and try to find a practical solution first.

Advice to complainants

It is best to try to speak to your neighbour about the problem in a friendly way first. If the situation doesn't improve, contact the Environmental Protection Team on 01362 656870.

Other Information

Straying - poultry owners should remember that not everyone likes poultry going into their gardens. They can cause damage and mess and could be at risk from predators. Whilst this is not a matter that the Council would investigate, you should keep them within the boundary of your own property.



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Keeping Poultry

Your Responsibility and the Legislation



This leaflet is designed for those who keep, or are considering keeping, poultry on a domestic scale and offers advice and guidance on how to minimise disturbance to neighbours from noise, smell and pests. If you require further information please contact the Environmental Protection Team on 01362 656870 or email us on envprotect@breckland.gov.uk

Poultry keeping is becoming an increasingly popular pastime and there are several issues that should be taken into account if you keep, or are planning to keep, poultry. Poultry includes cockerels, chickens, ducks, geese, turkeys, pheasants, and partridges to name but a few.

Noise

It is a fact of life that we all make noise whether we are talking to others, playing music or driving cars. However, some types of noise, particularly if they occur regularly or at unsocial hours, can affect others quality of life. Complaints of nuisance from cockerels crowing are on the increase, particularly if they are being kept in built up area in close proximity to neighbours. Geese can also be particularly noisy if they are disturbed. The following measures can be taken to reduce the nuisance of noise from poultry:

- Ⓡ Do you need a cockerel? Contrary to popular belief, you do not need a cockerel to encourage egg laying or to prevent feather plucking. If you do not intend to breed, you do not need to keep a cockerel.
- Ⓡ Keeping more than one cockerel in an area can lead to competitive crowing, particularly in the breeding season.
- Ⓡ Locate your poultry as far as practicable from neighbouring residential properties.
- Ⓡ Shut birds away at dusk and do not let them out until a reasonable hour in the morning.
- Ⓡ Cockerels tend to crow from first light so provide birds with a house where light is eliminated from entering as far as possible; however remember that ventilation will still be required.
- Ⓡ Try putting a shelf in the hen house that allows the cockerel to walk around at normal height but prevents it stretching its neck to make the crowing sound.
- Ⓡ If you live in a built up area in Breckland or have close neighbours, you are advised not to keep a cockerel.



Pests and Odour

Rats and mice can be a problem where poultry is kept. Food and water attract rodents and housing can form a harbourage. During warm weather, droppings and soiled bedding can give rise to unpleasant odour and attract flies.

To reduce the likelihood of smell and rodent infestation consider the following advice:

- Ⓡ Clean out poultry houses, coops and shelters regularly and dispose of waste responsibly.
- Ⓡ Remove and dispose of uneaten food. In the winter consider removing both food and water from dusk to dawn.
- Ⓡ Present food to birds in a fixed and stable container rather than scattering food on the ground.
- Ⓡ Store all feed stuffs in a tightly lidded vermin proof containers
- Ⓡ Consider raising shelters and coops off the ground to prevent them harbouring rats and mice underneath.
- Ⓡ Remove any broken eggs as soon as possible



Under the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949 there is a general duty on owners and occupiers to keep their property free from rats and mice. Owners who neglect this duty may receive a legal notice from the Council asking that steps are taken to resolve the problem. If a legal notice is not complied with, the Council may undertake the work themselves and charge the landowner the costs or, in very serious cases, take them to court.