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Ms Carol Warner VN

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[REDACTED]

02 July 2013

Dear Carol

RE: Warwick District Council Consultation
GT10: Land at Tollgate House and Guide Dogs National Breeding Centre

Thank you for forwarding the above document to me with a request for information about distances required for separation of dogs to prevent infection risk.

In your request you alluded to historical work undertaken by Guide Dogs about the minimal separation distances that would reduce the risk of disease transmission between dogs, and yes I can confirm to you that the science relating to that work is still relevant.

However, in relation to the specific Area of Search outlined in the brown colour in the Warwick District Council Consultation I would point out to you that the historical separation distances we provided were in relation to infection control within Guide Dog, and not from animals of a lower vaccination and health status. Our historical work considered the disease risk in animals that are vaccinated according to nationally agreed guidelines, and where each animal is subjected to careful clinical monitoring and regular veterinary examination. That work therefore excluded a number of diseases that are not seen in the Guide Dog population. From the Warwick District Council Consultation I see that this proposal could see the location of a population of dogs adjacent to the Breeding Centre, where there is no guarantee of the health management of the dogs, nor of movement of dogs onto that site that are not normally resident on the site. This is a very different scenario, and one that would offer substantially greater risk to the breeding programme animals. In particular one would need to be mindful of other diseases that are not seen in the Guide Dog population because of the vaccination regimes that are followed.



I think that you also need to be mindful of the fact that the Breeding Centre accommodates bitches that are in oestrus; these females produce pheromones specifically to attract male dogs. A local and potentially free roaming population of male dogs would likely be constantly trying to enter the Breeding Centre to seek out the females; the nuisance aspect could be quite considerable and this will also increase the disease risk because such male dogs will have a positive desire to enter the Centre rather than simply living nearby.

I think it is very important to stress that the location of the Breeding Centre was specifically planned to be remote to other dog populations for disease control purposes. An early decision was taken not to co-locate the Breeding Centre at, or adjacent to, the Guide Dogs Leamington Training Centre. Co-location of breeding and training at Leamington would have saved Guide Dogs substantial cost but has been avoided for many years because of disease control (even though the animals in training have a high health status and are all fully vaccinated).

Although the Breeding Centre has a perimeter fence, I do not think that it would be acceptable to consider a proposal adjacent to the Breeding Centre, and that some additional separation distance away from your perimeter would be needed.

Yours sincerely



Professor of Comparative Veterinary Reproduction
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