

Harrow TIMES

Crackdown on dangerous dogs

BRENT council is determined to collar irresponsible owners of dangerous dogs after five-year-old Ellie Lawrenson was mauled to death on New Year's Day.

The infant's death caused a public outcry that has led Brent Council to review how it deals with potentially dangerous dogs.

Although Ellie was killed by a "pit bull terrier-type" dog in St Helen's, Merseyside, Brent Council is reviewing practices in relation to dog controls to ensure it is doing all it can to protect residents.

The council issued a stern warning last Thursday to owners who kept dangerous dogs that if they used their animals to intimidate others they could be destroyed.

Councillor Irwin Van Colle, Brent Council's lead member for environment, planning and culture, said: "Ellie Lawrenson's shocking and tragic death has brought into sharp focus the issue of irresponsible ownership of vicious dogs.

"Problems with dangerous dogs are relatively rare in Brent, but we have to look to see if we are doing everything we can to protect the public.

"The council totally condemns those who keep dangerous dogs and use them to intimidate people.

"We will work with the police and do everything in our power to stop this and we will destroy these dogs if necessary.

"Please call Brent Council to report any dog that appears to be dangerous and we will investigate."

As part of the review, council officers are to meet with police to discuss better joint working and Brent is also looking to at using tenancy agreements to control dogs and do more to promote responsible ownership.

The council works with the police to enforce the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, which put restrictions on four types of dog - effectively banning pit bull terriers, which are now rare in England.

Pit bull terrier-type' dogs reported in Brent are usually Staffordshire bull terriers, which are not restricted, but officers stress that any type of dog can act dangerously.

The council and the police plan to take legal action over dangerous dogs, forcing them to be muzzled, leashed and restricted to certain places or to be destroyed.

To complain about a dog, call Brent Council on 020 8937 5252 or email env.health@brent.gov.uk

10:10am Saturday 3rd February 2007