

**REPORT TO:** Mayor and Members of Council

**PREPARED BY:** Ashley Cook, Director of Corporate Services / Municipal Clerk

**DEPARTMENT:** Corporate Services

**DIVISION:** By Law Enforcement

**MEETING DATE:** May 6, 2026

**SUBJECT:** North Middlesex Animal Control Award and Update

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### **PROPOSED MOTION**

THAT Council receive this report for information;

AND THAT Council acknowledge the award of the contract for comprehensive animal control services to Southwest Middlesex Animal Shelter, at an estimated annual cost of \$30,000, for a one (1) year term commencing July 3, 2026, with optional renewal for up to two (2) additional two (2) year terms, in accordance with the Request for Proposal and the Municipal Procurement Policy.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

THAT Council receive this report for information;

AND THAT Council acknowledge the award of the contract for comprehensive animal control services to Southwest Middlesex Animal Shelter, at an estimated annual cost of \$30,000, for a one (1) year term commencing July 3, 2026, with optional renewal for up to two (2) additional two (2) year terms, in accordance with the Request for Proposal and the Municipal Procurement Policy.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In July 2025, Council approved a pilot program to expand animal control services to include feral and stray cat management, addressing a previously identified service gap within the Municipality's dog-only contract model. The pilot has resulted in a sustained

reduction in cat-related service requests and improved support for vulnerable sectors and emergency response situations.

As the existing dog control contract approached expiry, a procurement process was undertaken to secure ongoing animal control services. The Request for Proposal closed on April 8, 2026, and resulted in one compliant submission from the current cat control provider, who has successfully delivered services under the pilot program since 2025.

The proposal meets the requirements for a combined dog and cat control service model. Staff are recommending it be awarded to support service continuity, integration, and improved operational efficiency.

The annual contract value of \$30,000 represents a marginal variance of \$1,950.00 from the approved 2026 Budget of \$28,050. This variance will be managed within existing By-Law Enforcement contracted services budgets. Failure to proceed would result in a potential service gap upon contract expiry and the loss of recent service improvements achieved through the pilot program.

### **LINK TO STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

**Fiscal Responsibility By seeking fiscal sustainability by balancing service needs, demands, and growth**

**Quality of Life, Recreation, Parks, and Culture By creating and maintaining high-quality public spaces and promote aging in place in the community**

### **BACKGROUND**

In July 2025, staff brought forward a report identifying a significant service gap within the Municipality's animal control portfolio. Historically, animal control services were limited to dog control through a contracted service provider (Lobo Animal Care Centre), with no formal mechanism in place to address feral or stray cats.

This gap resulted in recurring service requests related to stray and feral cats, which were not being actively managed under the existing service model. In response, Council approved a pilot project to introduce cat control services as an expansion of the Municipality's animal control program.

Since the implementation of the pilot project in mid-2025, staff have observed a complete and sustained reduction in service requests related to feral and stray cats, which were previously received on a frequent (often daily) basis. The pilot program has also supported broader community outcomes, including participation in vulnerable sector responses and assistance during provincial and regional emergency evacuation events.

While the Municipal animal control pilot project specifically expanded service to address feral and stray cats, the following table presents the full animal control service delivery profile for the 2025 reporting period, including both cat-related services as part of the pilot and existing dog control services delivered under the Municipality’s ongoing contract. This combined view is provided to illustrate overall service demand, demonstrate the impact of the pilot within the broader animal control system, and allow for a clear comparison of service activity and outcomes during the transition period.

The following tables summarizes animal control service activity for 2025, comparing dog and cat-related service volumes before and after implementation of the pilot program:

<b><u>Indicator</u></b>	<b><u>Pre-Pilot</u></b>	<b><u>Post-Pilot</u></b>	<b><u>Outcome</u></b>
Stray/Feral Cat Calls	Frequent (daily occurrence)	Rare/isolated	Service Gap Resolved
Response to Vulnerable Situations	Ad Hoc	Structured Support in Place	Improved Coordination
Emergency Response Participation	None	Active Contribution	Strengthen Regional Response
Service Delivery Model	Dog-Only Contract	Dog and Cat Contract	Expanded Scope and Increased Service Delivery
Public Complaint Volume	High (cat-related) Moderate (dog-related)	Minimal complaints Both contracts steady	Improved service satisfaction Service Gap Closed

As illustrated above, the implementation of the cat control pilot program resulted in a significant and sustained reduction in cat-related service requests, which are now limited to isolated occurrences and no longer represent a recurring service demand to be addressed by municipal staff. Dog control service levels remained stable throughout the reporting period compared to past trends, reflecting the continuation of the Municipality’s existing service model.

There have been measurable changes in call volume, and the pilot program has also resulted in an expansion of service capacity.

In addition to routine animal control services, Southwest Animal Shelter has demonstrated the capacity to support the Municipality in vulnerable sector situations and emergency response activities. This includes assisting with the safe handling and temporary care of animals during circumstances such as resident displacement, as well as providing support during regional and provincial emergency events where animal control resources are required.

This enhanced level of service represents a significant improvement over the previous service model, where such supports were not formally available, and contributes to broader municipal emergency preparedness and response efforts.

As the existing dog control contract approached expiry, staff were required to initiate a procurement process in accordance with the Municipality's Procurement Policy to ensure the continued provision of animal control services. In consideration of the expanded service model resulting from the cat control pilot program, the tender was structured to seek a comprehensive animal control provider for a combined service model including both cats and dogs.

## **DISCUSSION**

The Municipality's experience with both the historical dog control contract and the subsequent cat control pilot program provides an opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of a split-service delivery model and consider options for future service integration. Historically, animal control services were limited to dog control through a contracted provider (Lobo Animal Centre). As this service did not include the management of feral or stray cats, a separate contract was implemented through the approved pilot program to address this service gap (Southwest Animal Shelter).

The use of two distinct service providers has highlighted the administrative and operational complexities associated with a split-service model. In contrast, the cat control pilot program has demonstrated the benefits of a more integrated approach, including improved service outcomes and a reduction in administrative coordination. These findings support consideration of a single-provider model for comprehensive animal control services.

Southwest Middlesex Animal Shelter has responded to ongoing service calls directly and provided localized service support at 21 locations within the Municipality during the current 1-year pilot program expiring in July 2026. The provider works collaboratively with municipal staff as required, provides reporting in accordance with contract expectations,

and maintains access to a 24-hour by-appointment facility to support direct resident engagement. This facility also serves as a key service point for cat control-related matters, enhancing accessibility and responsiveness for the community.

Dog control services are provided by Animal Care Centre Lobo and have remained a consistent and long-standing component of the Municipality's animal control service model. The provider has maintained regular responsiveness to service calls, including support for lost and found dogs, and has provided an accessible service to residents when required. Reporting requirements have been met in accordance with contractual obligations, and the provider has worked collaboratively with municipal staff over a number of years to support ongoing service delivery.

With the expiry of the dog control contract approaching, staff commenced a procurement process. Accordingly, a tender was issued to secure ongoing animal control services. The Request for Proposals closed on April 8, 2026, and resulted in one compliant submission. The submission was received from the current cat control service provider, Southwest Middlesex Animal Shelter, which has been delivering services under the Municipality's pilot program since mid-2025.

The proposal was reviewed against the requirements of the RFP and was determined to meet the stated service scope for comprehensive animal control services, including both dog and cat control. Given the provider's demonstrated performance under the pilot program and established service delivery within the Municipality, the submission aligns with the intended outcomes of the procurement process. This model supports improved enforcement and compliance capacity while reducing administrative burden on municipal staff by transferring responsibility for adoption coordination and placement activities to the contracted provider. This correction addresses a service gap in the previous delivery structure, resulting in improved service efficiency and operational effectiveness.

The 2026 animal control budget of \$28,050 was established prior to market testing through the procurement process and therefore reflected an estimate of anticipated service costs. The procurement process resulted in a single compliant submission with an annual lump sum cost of approximately \$30,000, representing a marginal variance of \$1,950.00 above the allocated budget.

This variance is considered minimal in the context of the overall service scope and is anticipated to be offset by the transition to a fixed-cost model, which eliminates variable expenses associated with mileage claims and per-animal fees. The proposed structure provides improved budget certainty, reduces administrative processing requirements, and removes exposure to fluctuating service costs over the term of the contract.

If the Municipality does not proceed with the recommended award, there is a risk of service disruption given the expiry of the existing dog control contract and the absence of an alternative contracted provider. This would result in a gap in animal control services, particularly for dog-related matters, and may reduce the Municipality’s ability to respond to stray or lost animals in a timely manner.

Additionally, the operational efficiencies and service improvements achieved through the cat control pilot program would not be sustained, and the Municipality would lose the benefits associated with an integrated service delivery model, including reduced administrative coordination and improved emergency response support.

Overall, the recommended award supports the transition toward a consolidated animal control service model aligned with municipal objectives of efficiency and enhanced community response.

**FINANCIAL**

Funded through the 2026 Animal Control Contracted Services budget, with a \$1,950.00 variance to be mitigated within existing By-Law Enforcement contracted services budget items.

**ATTACHMENT**

- N/A

Prepared By: **Ashley Cook, Director of Corporate Services / Municipal Clerk**

Reviewed By: Ralph D'Alessandro, Director of Finance /Treasurer

Approved By: Samuel Shannon, Interim Chief Administrative Officer