

## Information for owners, potential owners and impacted residents

There has been an increase in people keeping chickens at home in recent years and occasionally also a cockerel. This is usually as a result of buying birds before knowing what gender they are.

It is not viewed as a sensible idea to keep cockerels when you live in an urban area, as they can be noisy and it is not a noise that most people in towns would be expecting to hear.

The noise caused by cockerels can be extremely intrusive due to the high pitched nature of the sounds and the time of day the noise can typically occur. This can cause significant distress to neighbouring properties and impact relationships between neighbours.



### I am thinking of purchasing a cockerel or chickens, what should I consider?

There are several factors that you need to consider prior to purchasing any poultry to keep at your property:

- **Do you really need a cockerel?** - Hens will still lay eggs without one, and if you do not intend to breed from the birds you will not need a cockerel.
- **Legal** - check the property title deeds to make sure you are allowed to keep poultry.
- **Planning permission** - check whether you need planning permission for the enclosure the bird is kept in.
- **Effective housing** - coop the cockerel and keep the coop as dark as possible to minimise early morning crowing as a cockerels will crow as soon as they see light.
- **Feed management** - it is essential to keep any chicken feed secure and off the ground as this could attract pests such as rats and mice to an area due to the availability of a food source.
- **Housing placement** – prior to purchasing poultry you should consider where on your property they will be housed as if they are too close to a boundary this could cause a potential nuisance to a neighbour. If they are in a corner this will make the area difficult to clean and maintain and could provide space to nest for pests.
- **Housing management** - prevent smells and infestation of rats and mice by cleaning out the enclosure frequently.

## **I own a cockerel – what can I do to reduce the chances of disturbing my neighbours?**

- **Consider competition** – other cockerels in the area will cause them to compete with each other and may result in even more crowing.

### **Potential Ways to Preventing Crowing**

- Cover the coop to trick the cockerel into thinking it is still night
- Lower the coop ceiling to prevent the cockerel throwing its head back to crow.
- Keep the cockerel and chickens locked up at night to reduce the risk of late night or early morning crowing.

## **If I am disturbed by a cockerel – what should I do?**

The owner of the cockerel may be genuinely unaware that their animal is causing a disturbance and therefore speaking to your neighbours may be the quickest and most effective means of resolving matters.

If this isn't successful, contact Customer Services on 0116 288 8961 or report your issue online using <https://www.oadby-wigston.gov.uk/pages/noise>, a case will then be opened and allocated to a case officer to investigate.

## **What will we do?**

The first step is your allocated case officer will contact you to discuss the case and set out the next steps to investigate your case or provide initial advice.

Typically this will start with asking you to record details of how and when the cockerel is disturbing you. This will allow us to build up a body of evidence to support your case and any action the council may be able to take.

Usually we will ask you to download The Noise App, which will allow you provide GPS tagged and time stamped recordings to the council, however diary sheets can be made available to residents without access to the a smart phone.

This must be done in all cases as it tells us:

- How long the crowing lasts – it is more likely that the law will consider nuisance is being caused if the cockerel is crowing for long periods
- When it is happening – it is more likely the law will consider nuisance is being caused if the cockerel is crowing at unsocial hours i.e. night, early morning or late evening.
- How long it happens for– the more often the crowing affects you, the more likely the law will consider it as a nuisance.

Once we have this information and the evidence to support your case we will then be in contact with you in relation to the next steps, this could be providing advice to your neighbour, but could escalate to the service of a legal notice instructing them to prevent or abate the noise.

This may not mean stopping the noise completely but reducing it to a more acceptable level to reduce impact on neighbours, however the best course of action will be determined by your case officer on a case-by-case basis.