



**Rats** – The Council will treat for rats free of charge. However, by law, rats are under the responsibility of the owner and/or occupier of a property to deal with – not the Council. The Council does have a duty to treat for rats if they are a threat to public health. To prevent the spread of rats, the Council does undertake regular sewer baiting.

You can use the Council's Pest Control Service or alternatively you can hire commercial pest controllers, which can be found in the yellow pages.

**Description** – Brown in colour with an off white under belly. They can grow to 270mm long and have a tail length of up to 200mm.

**Further Info** – Rats live in close association with other animals and humans and are usually nocturnal. The rat has very poor eyesight and is colour blind. However, the common rat has an excellent sense of touch, taste, smell and hearing. In favourable conditions, populations can grow rapidly. Rats are good swimmers, climbers, jumpers and burrowers.

Rats are known to carry leptospirosis, which may cause Weil's Disease – Leptospirosis is a bacteria carried in rats' urine, which may contaminate water in lakes, rivers, water supply, but not salt water. The risk of infection is greater in stagnant or slow-moving water, but cases have occurred in swift moving streams, with an enhanced risk where flash floods have washed out rat runs. The infection is caught by direct contact with rats' urine or rat pollution, with bacteria entering skin cuts and bruises, eyes, nose or mouth, and incubating for two to 12 days. Then a 'flu' like illness occurs for 2-3 weeks, causing fever, severe headache, pains in the back and calf, and prostration. A few cases develop jaundice and becomes Weil's disease. Salmonella infections also occur from food and water contaminated with rat excreta. Parasites transmitted by rats include ringworm, tapeworm, ticks and fleas.

**How to Treat and Control Measures** – A high percentage of rat infestations are due to bird feeding. You should not feed birds during the summer months. If you wish to treat the rat problem yourself, you can buy rat poison from any hardware store. You must follow the instructions on the container carefully.

**How the Council will Treat** – We put bait boxes down which contain poison. Our products are approved for both outdoor and indoor use under the Control of Pesticides Regulations 1986 as amended. The boxes are locked so only something the size of a rat or mouse can actually get inside the box. The rat/rats will feed in the box for 4–7 days and then they will die. We do make up to two revisit appointments to check that the treatment has been successful and to collect any bait boxes or dead rats.