

**REPORT FROM: ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES MANAGER**

**TO: EXECUTIVE**

**DATE: 28<sup>th</sup> MAY 2015**

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## **DOG WORKING GROUP FINDINGS**

### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To report back the findings of the Working Group including details of the public consultation undertaken through December and January and feedback from meetings held with representatives from Dog Welfare groups.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- (1) To recruit an additional two part time Enforcement Officers to support the Council in tackling dog fouling and other dog controls including enforcing Public Space Protection Orders and Community Protection Notices.
- (2) To adopt Keep Britain Tidy's 'We're watching you' campaign from Spring 2015 within selected parks, play areas and cemeteries throughout the Borough
- (3) To produce and distribute information for residents and visitors to the Borough advising of the Council's and other agencies' responsibilities in relation to dog issues.
- (4) That Officers bring forward a progress report on the above together with a plan and timetable for the review of existing dog control orders and introduction of new public space protection orders.

### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- (1) To provide in response to public concerns additional resource and measures of enforcement.
- (2) To ensure the Council provides residents and visitors with the appropriate information relating to the dog issues within the Borough.

## ISSUE

Waste Services presented a report to the Executive on the 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2014 in which we appraised Members of important new legal provisions which would affect the control of dogs. These new legal powers were identified as being the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 and the use of Public Space Protection Orders.

As recommended in the report the Executive set up a Member/Officer Working Group to look at how the Council was dealing with dog issues and how the new enforcement controls could be implemented by the Council.

The Working Group met on four occasions between October and March.

The Working Group carried out a public consultation exercise receiving 577 online responses and 200 responses from Borough wide street interviews.

The survey results showed the following;

- 81 % of those responding to the on line survey thought Dog fouling was by far the biggest issue.
- 73% of those interviewed on the street thought Dog fouling was an issue
- 23% of those responding thought Dogs off leads in parks, other recreational areas and cemeteries were a concern
- 27% of those interviewed thought Dogs off leads in parks, other recreational areas and cemeteries were a concern.
  
- 77% of responders thought dog fouling was a bigger problem on roads or paths
- 70% of responders thought dog fouling was a bigger problem in parks
- 59% of responders thought dog fouling was a bigger problem at sports pitches and other green areas.
  
- 69% of those interviewed thought Dog fouling was a bigger problem on roads or paths
- 80% of those interviewed thought Dog fouling was a bigger problem in parks
- 29% of those interviewed thought Dog fouling was a bigger problem at sports pitches and other green areas.

Additionally the Working Group identified that there was a strong level of support for keeping dogs on leads;

- 80% of those responding to the on line survey thought dogs should be kept on leads in parks, cemeteries, sports pitches, other green areas and other public areas.
- 85% of those interviewed thought dogs should be kept on leads in parks, cemeteries, sports pitches and other public areas.

The Working Group also found there were strong levels of support for dogs being prohibited from designated children's play areas and other play facilities;

- 91% of responders on line agreed that dogs should be prohibited from designated children's play areas and multi-use games areas.
- 91% of those interviewed agreed that dogs should be prohibited from designated children's play areas and multi-use games areas.

- 87% of responders on line agreed that dogs should be prohibited from other play facilities such as tennis courts and bowling greens.
- 93% of those interviewed agreed that dogs should be prohibited from other play facilities such as tennis courts and bowling greens.

To further understand how the Council may make best use the new powers open to it and to gain an understanding of the issues faced by voluntary organisations the Working Group met with representatives of Pendle Dogs in Need, Pendle Dog Rescue and Sibe and Sledge dogs to discuss the issues which those representatives felt were a priority.

Feedback from representatives of the groups indicated the need for the Council to take more enforcement action against offenders who failed to remove fouling. The need for dogs to be kept on leads and the need for the Council to be clearer on where and who to report fouling and other dog related issues too.

The Working Group examined current resource levels and costs and initiatives and approaches by other councils.

At the Budget Council meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> February the council made a growth provision of £50,000 to deal with dog issues.

The Working Group make four recommendations to address the issues raised.

Firstly for an additional two part time Enforcement Officers to be recruited to the Environmental Crime Team to take enforcement action against offenders failing to either clear dog fouling or control dogs in parks, cemeteries, sports pitches and other public areas throughout the Borough.

Secondly for the Council to take part in Keep Britain Tidy's soon to be launched national 'We're Watching you' campaign. This would include erection of the campaigns poster in identified problem areas to complement the publicity of the national campaign via BBC's Don't Mess With Me programme and coverage of the campaign objectives in national newspapers.

Thirdly to produce and distribute more widely in public buildings, town and parish council premises, veterinary surgeries etc. and via Dog Welfare Groups the saying no to dangerous dogs and saying no to dog fouling leaflets and posters produced for Colne in 2014.

Fourthly to review existing legal control orders and establish a plan for the introduction of public space protection orders.

## IMPLICATIONS

**Policy:** The Council's existing policy is embodied in the legal controls set out in the report to the Executive on the 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2014.

**Financial:** The £50,000 growth bid referred to above will cover the cost of a recruiting an enforcement officer, Joining the Keep Britain Tidy campaign and production and distribution of leaflets and posters.

**Legal:** As per the report presented to the Executive on the 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2014, considerable legal work will be required on drafting new Public Space Protection Orders as required

**Risk Management:** None arising from the report

**Health and Safety:** None arising from the report

**Sustainability:** None arising from the report

**Community Safety:** None arising from the report

**Equality and Diversity:** None arising from the report

## **APPENDICES**

### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

DOG ISSUES report to the Executive 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2014.

Dog Warden and Kennelling Contract Resources report to the Working Group 9<sup>th</sup> December 2014.

Minutes of the Dog Issues Working Group meeting held 20<sup>th</sup> January 2015.

Dog Issue Survey - summary presented to the Working Group 4<sup>th</sup> February 2015

Dog Warden costs and Kennelling of stray dogs report presented to the Working Group 4<sup>th</sup> February 2015.

Keep Britain Tidy - Love where you live– We're watching you campaign literature.