
DOG CONTROL REPORT 2011

1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to report on dog control in Wellington City for the year 1 July 2010 - 30 June 2011, as required under Section 10A of the Dog Control Act 1996¹.

2. Executive Summary

The Council's current approach acknowledges that the first step to responsible dog ownership is dog registration. This approach has seen the total number of registered dogs increase to 9,635 for the 2010/11 registration year, a substantial increase from 2009/10.

Promotion of the responsible dog owner category has seen a rise in the number of owners who hold the responsible dog owner status – increasing from 1970 to 2135, an increase of 165.

The number of dogs classified as menacing has increased due in part to the continued focus by Officers in imposing this classification as a mitigation measure to prevent harm to people, other animals and wildlife.

The number of infringement notices issued has decreased by 28% between 2009/10 and 2010/11. This reflects the Council's continuing focus on registration and shows that this registration message is accepted by dog owners. Underpinning this focus is the connection between registration and responsible dog ownership.

The total number of complaints received by the Council has increased reflecting the increase in dog numbers. However, complaints as a proportion of the total number of dogs, has actually decreased. There has been a decrease in the number of attacks on people compared to 2009/10.

There were no prosecutions during the 2010/11 period for attacks resulting in serious injury.

¹ s10A excerpt attached as Appendix One

3. Recommendations

Officers recommend that the Strategy and Policy Committee:

- 1. Receive the information;*
- 2. Agree to the attached report in Appendix Three on the Council's policy and practices in relation to dog control for the year 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2011.*
- 3. Note that the report is required under Section 10A of the Dog Control Act 1996 and that Section 10A requires that the report be publicly notified and a copy provided to the Department of Internal Affairs.*
- 4. Recommend to Council that it agree to the attached report (in Appendix Three) on the Council's policy and practices in relation to the control of dogs for the year 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2011.*

4. Background

The Council has a legal requirement to manage the provisions under the Dog Control Act 1996 and Dog Control Amendment Acts 2003, 2004, 2006 and 2010. The Dog Control Act provides the legislative framework for Council to manage dog behaviour, public safety and owner compliance².

The Council's Dog Policy was adopted in December 2009. The Policy makes provisions relating to the control of dogs in public places, within Wellington City. These policy provisions are enforceable under the Wellington City Council Consolidated Bylaw 2008 - Part 2 Animals.

The Dog Policy and Animals Bylaw was passed at full Council on 11 December 2009.

5. Discussion

5.1 Introduction

The Council has a statutory duty, under Section 10A of the Dog Control Act 1996, to report annually on its Dog Control Policy and practices. The Council is also required to give public notice of the report and must send a copy to the Secretary of Local Government (Department of Internal Affairs), which will be sent on the resolution of the Council.

The attached report meets the Council's statutory duty for the year 1 July 2010 – 30 June 2011.

² information regarding the menacing and dangerous classifications is attached as Appendix Two

5.2 Consultation and Engagement

This report has been prepared by Council officers in accordance with s10A reporting requirements provided by the Department of Internal Affairs. No general consultation or consultation with Maori is required for this report.

5.3 Financial Considerations

There are no financial considerations in relation to this report.

5.4 Climate Change Impacts and Considerations

There are no climate change impacts or considerations in relation to this report.

5.5 Long-Term Council Community Plan Considerations

The Dog Policy and Animals Bylaw are monitored and enforced by the Building Consents & Licensing business unit under Activity 6.5.3 and are funded from the operating project C478 Public Health.

6. Conclusion

The annual report on dog control in Wellington City for the year 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2011 fulfils a statutory duty under Section 10A of the Dog Control Act 1996.

- Appendix One: Dog Control Act 1996, Section 10A excerpt;
- Appendix Two: Dog Control Act 1996, Dangerous and Menacing classifications;
- Appendix Three: Section 10A Report.

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Supporting Information

1) Strategic Fit / Strategic Outcome

The Council has a statutory duty under the Dog Control Act 1996 to adopt a policy and bylaw on the control of dogs in Wellington. This paper supports the following Council outcomes - Outcome 2.1: Safety To ensure that people in Wellington feel safe at any time, Outcome 2.8 Public Health, Public Health efforts promote the health and wellbeing of the population, 6.5 Healthier - Wellington's population will enjoy a healthy lifestyle and high standards of public health.

2) LTCCP/Annual Plan reference and long term financial impact

The Dog Policy and Animals Bylaw are monitored and enforced by the Property, Housing, Consents & Licensing Directorate under Activity 6.5.3 and are funded from the operating project C478 Public Health.

3) Treaty of Waitangi considerations

N/A

4) Decision-Making

The report reflects the views and preferences of those with an interest in this matter who have been consulted with.

5) Consultation

a) General Consultation

This report has been prepared by Council officers in accordance with s10A reporting requirements provided by the Department of Internal Affairs. No consultation is required for this report.

b) Consultation with Maori

N/A.

6) Legal Implications

This report meets the Council's statutory obligations under Section 10A of the Dog Control Act 1996.

7) Consistency with existing policy

The report is consistent with the Council's current Dog Policy 2009 and the Wellington Consolidated Bylaw 2008 – Part 2 Animals.

APPENDIX ONE

Section 10A, Dog Control Act 1996

s10A - Territorial authority must report on dog control policy and practices

- (1) A territorial authority must, in respect of each financial year, report on the administration of—
 - (a) its dog control policy adopted under section 10; and
 - (b) its dog control practices.
- (2) The report must include, in respect of each financial year, information relating to—
 - (a) the number of registered dogs in the territorial authority district:
 - (b) the number of probationary owners and disqualified owners in the territorial authority district:
 - (c) the number of dogs in the territorial authority district classified as dangerous under section 31 and the relevant provision under which the classification is made:
 - (d) the number of dogs in the territorial authority district classified as menacing under section 33A or section 33C and the relevant provision under which the classification is made:
 - (e) the number of infringement notices issued by the territorial authority:
 - (f) the number of dog related complaints received by the territorial authority in the previous year and the nature of those complaints:
 - (g) the number of prosecutions taken by the territorial authority under this Act.
- (3) The territorial authority must give public notice of the report—
 - (a) by means of a notice published in—
 - (i) 1 or more daily newspapers circulating in the territorial authority district; or
 - (ii) 1 or more other newspapers that have at least an equivalent circulation in that district to the daily newspapers circulating in that district; and
 - (b) by any means that the territorial authority thinks desirable in the circumstances.
- (4) The territorial authority must also, within 1 month after adopting the report, send a copy of it to the Secretary for Local Government.

Dog Control Policy 2009 – Dangerous and Menacing Classifications

Classification as Dangerous Dog

Under the Act provision is made for classifying individual dogs as dangerous. This classification is made where:

- an owner of the dog has been convicted of an attack offence under section 57A(2) of the Act
- the territorial authority has sworn evidence that the dog has shown aggressive behaviour
- the owner admits that the dog constitutes a threat to the safety of any person, animal or stock.

This procedure is prescribed by law and is not open to interpretation by Council. In addition to all other obligations the owner of any dog that is classified as dangerous must:

- ensure their property is fully fenced and gated
- ensure the dog is muzzled in any public place
- ensure the dog is neutered
- not dispose of the dog to any other person without the written consent of the territorial authority.

Classifying dogs as dangerous is an effective method of controlling individual dogs that have demonstrated aggressive or dangerous behaviour. Council will, where appropriate, classify dogs as dangerous.

Classification as Menacing Dog

Under the Act provision is made for classifying dogs as menacing. This classification is made where a territorial authority considers a dog may:

- pose a threat to any person, stock, poultry, domestic animal, or protected wildlife because of any observed or reported behaviour of the dog or
- has characteristics typically associated with a prohibited dog breed or type.

Menacing classification due to breed or type

In addition to all other obligations the owner of any dog that is classified as menacing due to breed or type must:

- ensure the dog is muzzled in any public place
- ensure the dog is neutered within 1 month of classification.

Menacing classification due to behaviour

In addition to all other obligations the owner of any dog that is classified as menacing due to behaviour:

- must ensure the dog is muzzled in any public place
- may be ordered by the Council to have the dog neutered, within 1 month of notification.

Classifying dogs as menacing is an effective method of controlling individual dogs that have demonstrated aggressive or dangerous behaviour. Council will, where appropriate, classify dogs as menacing