

DELIBERATIONS ON DOG CONTROL POLICY AND BYLAW AND FEEDBACK ON THE IDEA OF A FENCED DOG PARK

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is in two parts:

Part One – Review of the Dog Control Policy and Dog Control Bylaw

The Council's Dog Control Policy and Bylaw must be reviewed and adopted by 21 September 2017. There were mixed views on proposed changes but general support. Feedback, issues and options are discussed.

Part Two – Feedback on the Idea of a Fenced Dog Park

There was broad support for the idea of a fenced dog park in Porirua. It is proposed that this is included in the development of the Long-term Plan 2018-38 for wider consultation.

PURPOSE

To seek the Council's agreement to adopt the attached Dog Control Policy and Dog Control Bylaw; and to include a fenced dog park in the development of the Long-term Plan 2018-38 for wider consultation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the City Delivery Committee:

1. Receive the report and submissions on the review of dog rules and feedback on a fenced dog park
2. Agree to recommend that the Council
 - a) Adopt the Dog Control Policy and Dog Control Bylaw as amended by deliberations
 - b) Agree that the Porirua City Council General Bylaw 1991, Part 5 - Control of Dogs is revoked
 - c) Agree that the Part 5A 'Pooper Scooper' Bylaw is revoked
 - d) Note that a review of the adequacy and location of signs for on and off leash dog areas will occur within existing budgets for signs renewal and further budget to be considered for inclusion in the development of the Long-term Plan 2018-38
 - e) Agree to include fenced dog park options in the development of the Long-term Plan 2018-38

Reports contain recommendations only. Refer to the meeting minutes for the final decision.

BACKGROUND

Dog control

1. The Council promotes, encourages and enforces responsible dog ownership practices and carries out public education, dog registration, enforcement, control of stray dogs, responds to complaints and manages impounded, dangerous and menacing dogs.

The Dog Control Act 1996

2. The Dog Control Act 1996 promotes responsible dog ownership and the general welfare of dogs. The Act provides the statutory framework for councils to minimise danger, distress, and nuisance caused by dogs, while also providing for their recreational needs. Councils are required to have an overall dog policy and a bylaw to enforce it. The Act requires some information to be included in both the policy and bylaw.
3. Changes to the Act are expected in early 2018 to reduce the risk and harm of dog attacks including stronger rules and licensing for owners of high-risk dogs; guidance for councils; education about dog behaviour and safety; changes to infringements and offences; and reporting requirements for councils on dog attacks. Councils are likely to be required to amend policies as a result.

The Council's Dog Control Policy and Bylaws

Document name	Review period
Dog Control Policy	Last reviewed and adopted in 2011.
Dog Control Bylaw (Porirua City Council General Bylaw 1991, Part 5 - Control of Dogs)	Last reviewed and adopted on September 2005. Must be reviewed and adopted again by 21 September 2017 otherwise it is revoked.
'Pooper-Scooper' Bylaw (Porirua City Council General Bylaw 1991, Part 5A – relates to cleaning up dog waste)	Last reviewed and adopted in April 2012. Must be reviewed again in April 2022.

4. The Council's dog bylaw must be reviewed and adopted by 21 September 2017. It is practical to incorporate the key aspects of the 'Pooper-Scooper' Bylaw in the main dog bylaw. A dog policy is reviewed at the same time for consistency.

Considerable interest in dog issues in Porirua

5. Porirua has ~4,800 dog registrations, increasing by 200-300 a year and is on a par with Wellington and Lower Hutt for dog ownership per head of population (see Attachment 7 for statistical information on dogs). Many dog owners are interested in increasing access to public places where dogs can be exercised including fenced dog parks and have an interest in fees and their use. Some people have concerns with dogs in terms of potential for harm (attacks on people, other dogs and wildlife) and nuisance (dog waste, barking, roaming), reflected in the annual resident satisfaction survey and queries to the Contact Centre. Dog attacks nationally increase local concern.

Consultation on dog rules and feedback on the idea of a fenced dog park

6. From 16 June – 14 July 2017, the Council consulted on the review of dog rules. Feedback was also sought on the idea of a fenced dog park in Porirua including features and funding. A summary analysis of feedback is available in Attachment 1.

DISCUSSION AND OPTIONS

7. This section sets out:
- the results of the dog rule consultation and recommendations for change
 - feedback on the idea of a fenced dog park and a recommendation

DOG CONTROL POLICY AND BYLAW

8. The policy and bylaw were revised with clearer language. Comments were invited on any aspect of dog control including several proposals:
- addition of six new dog off leash exercise areas and removal of two exercise areas
 - changes to some off leash dog exercise areas and dog prohibited areas
 - compulsory neutering (de-sexing) for dogs classified as menacing based on breed / type
 - making it easier to obtain and keep 'responsible owner' status
 - incorporating the Part 5A 'Pooper-Scooper' Bylaw into the overall Dog Control Bylaw

Overall feedback

9. Submissions on the proposals were generally favourable. Not all submitters commented on every category and in some cases there were low numbers. Attachment 1 provides a summary analysis of feedback. Other issues raised included environmental and ecological issues and values (e.g. Plimmerton and Pukerua Bay beaches, Pāuatahanui Inlet and its various reserves, Te Ara Piko Pathway and Camborne Walkway), fees, enforcement, dog faeces, rubbish bins and signs.
10. A practical improvement to the bylaw and policy is the creation of schedules for off leash dog exercise areas and dog prohibited areas. Changes to these areas can be more easily made by Council resolution as the need, options and information are available.

Addition of six new off leash dog exercise areas

11. Dogs are required to be on leash at all times except in specific areas. There are currently 19 formal off leash dog exercise areas in Porirua plus many beaches. New areas suggested are: Cardiff Park and Rangitahi Park. The proposed full list is in Schedule 1 of both the policy and bylaw.

Baxter's Knob (south east open space, Aotea) – consultation proposal was to add as an off leash dog exercise area

12. While 83% (43 of 52) agreed, a property owner bordering the site disagreed because their purchase was based on the reserve, privacy, quiet and natural surround, values that will be affected if the site is formalised and promoted. It is unclear if these concerns are shared by others. The Porirua City Reserve Management Plan identified dog exercise areas for Baxter's Knob Reserve several years ago. However, the site may no longer be suitable for off leash dog exercise as it is a small wetland, now with properties on three sides. The rapid development of Aotea requires the Council to plan for more open space development.

Recommendation: do not consider Baxter's Knob south east open space for off leash dog exercise.

Endeavour Park (Whitby) – consultation proposal was to add the grassed space behind the Montessori School as an off leash dog exercise area

13. This grassed open space to the south of the Montessori School is in a fully developed residential area. It has a path running through it and used informally to exercise dogs. North of the school are

the football fields where dogs are prohibited during events and otherwise required to be on leash. 79% (41 of 52) agreed with the proposal. Of the 17% (9) who disagreed were two local residents concerned with noise, particularly barking dogs, child safety and parking congestion. Dogs barking during exercise set off answering barks from dogs in nearby properties. This noise is amplified in the park basin. The proposed site is not appropriate because of the proximity to the school and the residential development. Dogs must continue to be on leash at all times.

Recommendation: do not consider the Endeavour Park (south of Montessori School) site for off leash dog exercise.

Cardiff Park (Cannons Creek) – consultation proposal was to add as an off leash dog exercise area

14. Cardiff Park is a casual sport, training and general recreation area and used informally to exercise dogs. 86% (44 of 51 people) agreed with the proposal. The Porirua City Reserve Management Plan outcome for the park is to identify values and long term management options.

Recommendation: add Cardiff Park as an off leash dog exercise area.

Rangituhi Park (Elsdon) – consultation proposal was to add as an off leash dog exercise area

15. Rangituhi Park is a casual recreation area and used informally to exercise dogs. 84% (42 of 50) agreed with the proposal. The Porirua City Reserve Management Plan outcomes for Rangituhi Park are to maintain open space for casual sport and recreation and safeguard adjacent natural values for biodiversity and natural regeneration.

Recommendation: add Rangituhi Park as an off leash dog exercise area.

Karehana Park (Plimmerton) – consultation proposal was to add the southern part as an off leash dog exercise area

16. Karehana Park is a neighbourhood park with a playground to the north where dogs are prohibited and open grass space to the south used for kick around and informally used to exercise dogs. Porirua City Reserve Management Plan outcomes for Karehana Park include providing for both dog-free and off-leash dog exercise areas within the park.
17. 73% (37 of 51) agreed with the proposal. Of the 22% (11) who disagreed, the concern was for safety of children using the playground and open space and the difficulty of controlling dogs. Options include keeping dogs on leash in the southern part of the park or placing a fence between the two parts although it is understood that the vision for the park is to maintain its open form. This requires further assessment and consultation and should continue to be a part of the Plimmerton Village Planning process. Until a decision is made, dogs must be on leash.

Recommendation: defer a decision on Karehana Park as an off leash dog exercise area.

Staithe Scenic Reserve (links Ascot Park, Paremata, Whitby) – consultation proposal was to make the site an off leash dog exercise area

18. 75% (38 of 51) agreed with the proposal to make the reserve an off leash dog exercise area. This is a large (~15 hectare) reserve with steep and mixed terrain with natural and recreational values. There is access from three suburbs. Porirua City Reserve Management Plan outcomes for the reserve include protecting and developing pathway connections, regenerating native bush, encouraging casual recreation by providing amenity open spaces, natural landscapes, a pathway network and enabling a Dog Exercise Area. The Conclusion Walkway redevelopment, recently completed, requires dogs on leash.
19. On review, the consultation information for this proposal was incorrect and should not have

proposed the entire Staithes Scenic Reserve. Apart from the Conclusion Walkway, requiring dogs on leash, there is not a lot of flat or easy terrain and so it is not conducive to easy walking or for practical dog exercise. The proposal for an off leash dog exercise area should instead have been for the open flat grassed area of Staithes Scenic Reserve at the northern end of Doncaster Terrace. For this reason the decision should be deferred until the area is reassessed and appropriate consultation completed.

Recommendation: defer a decision on Staithes Scenic Reserve as an off leash dog exercise area.

Removal of off leash dog exercise areas

Ascot Park (Plantation Area) and Bedford Reserve (north of Cannons Creek Pool) – proposed removal as off leash dog exercise areas

20. The removal of these two areas for off leash dog exercise from the policy and bylaw is necessary given significant change. Ascot Park (Plantation Area) no longer exists as it has been developed. Bedford Reserve is being developed this summer under the Eastern Porirua Project as a park and community hub with seating, bbq, shelter, paths to the pool, performing stage, volleyball court and play equipment.

Recommendation: remove Ascot Park (Plantation Area) and Bedford Reserve as off leash dog exercise areas.

Wi Neera Drive Esplanade Reserve – consultation proposal was to remove as an off leash dog exercise area

21. Wi Neera Drive Esplanade Reserve is a three hectare reserve on the harbour foreshore with natural landscape and recreation values. Porirua City Reserve Management Plan outcomes include improving amenity values encouraging walking and landscape appreciation, a mix of recreation opportunities focused on the coastal environment and access to the sea (organised water sports, children’s play spaces (dogs prohibited), and informal recreation. The outcomes do not mention facilitating dog exercise. 64% (23 of 36) agreed with the proposal. Dogs must be on leash.

Recommendation: Remove Wi Neera Drive Esplanade Reserve as an off leash dog exercise area.

Motukaraka Point Beach – consultation proposal was to remove as an off leash dog exercise area

22. 58% (26 of 46) agreed with the proposal and 20% (9 of 46) disagreed. Motukaraka Point Beach is now connected to Te Ara Piko Pathway to the south. The dog on leash requirement for Te Ara Piko Pathway should continue. This summer, the pathway will extend from the new Kakaho boardwalk in the north, south toward Motukaraka Point. The following year, Te Ara Piko will extend north from the boardwalk at Kakaho towards Camborne Walkway. Depending on funding, it is hoped to finish along Grays Road and connect to Camborne Walkway in three to four years.

Recommendation: Remove Motukaraka Point Beach as an off leash dog exercise area.

Camborne Walkway – consultation proposal was to change on leash requirements north and south

23. Camborne Walkway runs 1.6 km from Pascoe Avenue in the south to Grays Road in the north. It is very popular, away from cars, beside the sea and flat, appeals to a wide range of groups, close to several housing areas and relatively sheltered from the northerly winds.

24. The proposal is for dogs to continue off leash apart from:
- south end, dogs must be on leash from Pascoe Ave until past the boatsheds (to prevent dogs from entering boatsheds)

- north end, dogs must be on leash between Grays Road carpark until past the Wellington Jet Sport Club
25. The proposal recognises mixed use of the areas. At Pascoe Avenue dogs are required to be on leash as they are led from cars and then very shortly reach the boatsheds where there have been reports that off leash dogs enter properties. To the north, past the Wellington Jet Sport Club, there is a mixed use area including picnicking in the grassed space with tables and the carpark on Grays Road which can be a busy vehicle and pedestrian space.
 26. This was the most keenly debated proposal and location. The walkway is very popular among dog owners. Although only 50 people commented, there was a close result with 50% (25 of 50) in favour and 46% (23 of 50) against. Those disagreeing considered the restrictions too complex for such small areas, likely to be overlooked and perhaps need not apply all year.
 27. Three submitters favoured greater restrictions i.e. dogs on leash or prohibited. Reasons included the very busy nature of the walkway at times with runners, walkers of varying speed, agility and numbers, prams and dogs and concern over dog faeces. Also mentioned were the setting, environment and ecological values related to Te Awarua-o-Porirua Harbour and particularly the Pāuatahanui Inlet, and the eventual connection of Camborne Walkway with Te Ara Piko Pathway around the inlet. Attachment 1 provides the major comments.
 28. Track counter data for Camborne Walkway from 2003 and 2004 showed daily counts exceeded 300/day, some of the highest recreational track counts recorded in the City outside an event. Peak use is February/March. An average of 100 people/day in winter means over 35,000 people a year use the walkway, not including use in warmer months and increased use over 14 years as the surrounding network has expanded and the population increased.
 29. Once Te Ara Piko joins Camborne, the counts for both pathways will significantly increase. Users for each walkway tend to be from a separate user base but when the paths join there will be more overlap between groups, as some will travel further. As noted, it is hoped to finish Te Ara Piko along Grays Road and connect it to Camborne in three to four years depending on funding.
 30. On balance, it is considered important to proceed with the proposed on leash requirements north and south to manage mixed use of these areas. This means the walkway will continue to be off leash from north of the boatsheds in the south to the Wellington Jet Sport Club in the north. Information on the changes will be important for dog owners and walkers.
 31. Consideration of the walkway as an off leash dog exercise area is important given its huge popularity with different user groups, narrow nature in parts, environmental values, and impending connection with Te Ara Piko Walkway and increase in numbers and types of users.

Recommendations:

- Change the conditions for Camborne Walkway so that dogs are off leash apart from:
 - south end - on leash from Pascoe Avenue until past the boatsheds
 - north end - on leash between Grays Road carpark and Wellington Jet Sport Club.
- Consider the future of the walkway as an off leash dog exercise area with its popularity with different user groups and expected increase in use when connected to the on leash Te Ara Piko Walkway.

Muri Reserve (Pukerua Bay) – consultation proposal was for the western side of the reserve to remain an off leash dog exercise area

32. Developments in Muri Reserve include eastern side native bush planting and community garden. 62% (23 of 37) were in favour of the change.

Recommendation: Retain the western side of Muri Reserve as an off leash dog exercise area.

Main city beaches – proposed changes for dog prohibited times

33. Currently, dogs are allowed off leash on all beaches apart from five main city beaches where they are prohibited from 1 November to 31 March 10am – 7pm. The consultation proposal was to extend the time that dogs are allowed on the main city beaches by changing the start date for restrictions from 1 November to 1 December. This is because use of the beaches does not generally increase significantly until the weather settles and warms later in the year.

34. The beaches are:

- Karehana Beach (the sandy beach south of Plimmerton Boating Club to south of Cluny Road before the rocks)
- Paremata Beach (between Pascoe Avenue and the Dolly Varden toilets)
- Plimmerton Beach (south of the Fire Station from the sandy beach beginning at Sunset Parade and south to Taupō Stream)
- Pukerua Bay Beach
- Titahi Bay Beach

35. Between 44 and 47 submitters made their views known for each location. Most were in favour of extending the time. However, comments particularly for Plimmerton, Pukerua Bay and Titahi Bay Beach were about dogs off leash and uncontrolled, dog faeces and owners not cleaning up.

36. Several submitters mentioned safety of wildlife, particularly disruption of the little blue penguin on Plimmerton and Pukerua Bay and other native birds and reptiles in Pukerua Bay.¹ Plimmerton Village Planning has identified support for the Pest-Free Plimmerton's development of breeding houses for little blue penguins. This highlights the need to balance environmental and conservation values of a site with other activities and user groups.

37. On balance, with the low numbers responding and the values of environment and safety (people and wildlife), there is not enough justification to extend the time for dogs on main city beaches. The need to protect wildlife suggests further consideration is given to controlling dogs on Plimmerton Beach and Pukerua Bay Beach by requiring them on leash during permitted times.

Recommendation: Retain existing prohibited times for dogs on city beaches (1 November to 31 March 10am to 7pm) and consider the need for further restrictions at Plimmerton and Pukerua Bay beaches.

Changes to other dog prohibited areas

38. Proposals for changes to other dog prohibited areas were:

- Taua Tapu Track, Plimmerton – to prohibit dogs from 1 August to 1 November to avoid lambing season

¹ The little blue penguin (kororā), the world's smallest penguin, is protected under the Wildlife Act 1953 and classified as 'At Risk, Declining' by the Department of Conservation. Recent deaths at Whitireia and in Wellington were likely by dogs off leash.

- Te Rahui o Rangituhi (previously Colonial Knob Parklands) – to prohibit dogs apart from on leash on the summit road to the stock gate or sign at 2.2 kms
 - Porirua Scenic Reserve
 - Aotea Lagoon – to prohibit dogs from the rose garden, playground and splash pad, otherwise on leash elsewhere
39. Although there were low numbers responding, there was general support for the proposed changes in each of these areas and no significant issues were raised (see Attachment 1).

Recommendation: Make the changes to the above areas as described.

Te Ara Piko Pathway and Pāuatahanui Inlet

40. More control of dogs around Pāuatahanui Inlet has been requested including at Camborne as described earlier and on Te Ara Piko Pathway which is a shared pathway and requires dogs to be on leash. Off leash dogs have been seen leaving the pathway and jumping into the water and reserve vegetation and tidal areas and disturbing birds and other wildlife feeding, resting, nesting and mating.
41. The Guardians of Pāuatahanui Inlet (GOPI) would like the foreshore and beaches of Pāuatahanui Inlet from, and including, the Pāuatahanui Wildlife Reserve to Pascoe Avenue at Paremata Beach to be included in the list of dog prohibited areas. Pāuatahanui Inlet is an area of special environmental and ecological interest and status. Parts of it are under the management and protection of several different organisations, covenants and rules, for example the Pāuatahanui Wildlife Reserve where dogs are prohibited.²
42. GOPI suggests more ‘dogs on leash’ signs are installed at known popular dog swimming holes along Te Ara Piko pathway e.g. Horokiri Stream where the bank along the pathway is crumbling with dogs going in and out of the water.
43. GOPI also suggests dog owners are given a brochure about the effects of dogs on flora and fauna. Simple messages such as: ‘just the presence of dogs can disturb birds, while chasing birds prevents them from feeding, mating and nesting in the area’ could be used. The brochure could also be given people registering dogs.
44. Te Ara Piko is an increasingly popular mixed use pathway with walkers (solo, groups, prams), cyclists and dogs on leash. The pathway runs beside Grays Road for much of its current length, apart from a small section at Horokiri Stream. Large sections of the pathway run through Pāuatahanui Wildlife Management Reserve where dogs are otherwise prohibited. Having dogs in such an area is a particular privilege, provided the rules are observed with dogs kept on leash and under control. Breaches of these rules need to be monitored and better reported.
45. Options for dogs on Te Ara Piko Pathway include: retaining the current arrangement of dogs on leash; prohibiting dogs from certain sections; prohibiting dogs from the entire pathway; or reviewing the future of dogs on leash as part of an overall review of the pathway’s increasing use and extension. Further consultation on this would be important given the pathway’s popularity.

Recommendation: Retain current arrangements for dogs on leash on Te Ara Piko Pathway, reminding dog owners/walkers of this requirement and monitor behaviour of dogs on the pathway.

² <http://www.gopi.org.nz/the-inlet/natural-history/wildlife-reserve/>

Neutering (de-sexing) dogs based on breed / type

46. Neutering (de-sexing) reduces aggression in dogs. The Dog Control Act 1996 allows a council to make its own decision on neutering. The Council's current policy is to require compulsory neutering for all dogs classed as menacing based on behaviour. The proposal consulted on is to require neutering of dogs classed as menacing based on breed or type. Information on the number of dogs in Porirua classified in this way is in Attachment 7.
47. As noted, changes to the Dog Control Act 1996 expected in early 2018 to reduce the risk and harm of dog attacks may direct councils to take this approach rather than leaving it to councils to adopt a policy position. On balance, with this likelihood and Porirua having small numbers of dogs classed as menacing based on breed / type, it is appropriate to defer a decision.

Recommendation: Defer a decision on compulsory neutering (de-sexing) for dogs classified as menacing based on breed / type until the outcome of the government's review of these provisions of the Dog Control Act 1996 are known after the election.

Make it easier to obtain and keep Responsible Dog Owner Status

48. The Council encourages, recognises and rewards responsible dog ownership as permitted by s.6(2)(a) of the Dog Control Act 1996. The Council grants, on application, 'responsible dog owner status' which entitles discounted dog registration fees. Currently, status is mainly property-based. The proposal consulted on was to waive the responsible dog owner application fee for:
- new dog owners and owners moving to Porirua
 - owners with responsible dog owner status when moving property within Porirua
49. Owners would need to advise the Council and confirm, using a checklist, that the property is suitable, safe and adequately fenced. If on a subsequent inspection or call out, it was found that the property was not as had been advised by the owner, they would need to pay the responsible dog owner application fee.
50. While generally supportive (82% - 32 of 39), only a small number made their views known. One suggestion was to require evidence of owners and dogs having been trained to ensure dog welfare and behaviour is of a good standard and being eligible for further fee discounts. Reference was made to Wellington City Council's policy requirement for a pass certificate for an approved Responsible Dog Owner Education and Obedience course. Porirua City Council has previously offered discounts through an approved dog obedience and agility course (Titahi Bay Canine Obedience Club). This could be considered in a further review of responsible dog owner status.

Recommendations: Waive the 'responsible dog owner status' application fee for new dog owners, dog owners moving to Porirua and dog owners moving property in Porirua provided responsible dog owner policy conditions are met.

Incorporate the Part 5A 'Pooper Scooper' Bylaw in the main Dog Control Bylaw

51. There are two bylaws relating to dogs. There is an opportunity to incorporate the smaller Part 5A 'Pooper-Scooper' Bylaw into the overall bylaw. While generally supportive, 84% (31 of 37), only a small number commented. A common concern is about owners not cleaning up after their dogs.

Recommendation: Incorporate the Part 5A 'Pooper-Scooper' Bylaw into the Dog Control Bylaw.

Other issues raised in consultation

52. Several other issues were raised (faeces, rubbish bins, fees and signs) and are described below.

Dog faeces

53. 27% (29 of 108) of submitters mention concern over dog faeces including the amount, the location (beach, footpaths, walkways etc) and owners not clearing up after their dogs as required (including ignoring it or leaving the plastic bag and contents on the ground).

Rubbish bins

54. In conjunction with concern over dog faeces is concern over the lack of and poor location of rubbish bins. 12% (13 of 108) mentioned these concerns for popular dog exercise areas. There were suggestions for alternate bins and faeces disposal methods (e.g. the Big Belly solar power bin and sand refill stations to cover faeces).

Dog registration fees

55. 40% (43 of 108) of submitters raised the issue of dog registration fees, including the level of fees compared with other districts, and need for greater clarity on use of fees. Suggestions were made for changes to fee structure, method for calculation (e.g. price based on dog size, whether or not an aggressive dog) and greater discounts for responsible owners. Dog registration fees are dealt with through the annual plan process. Information on use of fees will continue to be published.

Enforcement

56. 23% (25 of 108) mentioned concern about low level of bylaw enforcement, requests for more animal officer presence and patrols of popular dog exercise areas at peak times, and taking action against irresponsible dog owners.

Signs

57. 11% (12 of 108) mentioned concern about signs relating to dog control including the location of on and off leash dog areas. Concerns included location, clarity and consistency of information, visibility of signs, and that signs are being ignored. One submitter provided a detailed audit and opinion on the suitability of almost every site in Porirua for dog activity. A review of the adequacy and location of signs for on leash and off leash dog areas will take place within existing budgets for signs renewal and with further budget to be considered for inclusion in the development of the Long-term Plan 2018-38.

Other issues and suggestions

58. Several other issues mentioned included:
- Having a rehoming policy for dogs at the Animal Control Centre in Prosser Street (many dogs are rehomed through the Council's relationship with the SPCA which visits weekly to assess and rehome dogs that are suitable)
 - Making sure that city planning for new subdivisions and other development takes into account the need for dog exercise areas (this has been shared with the District Plan team)
 - Increasing the amount of information and services available on the web including maps, more information, more online services e.g. applying for responsible dog owner status
 - Inconsistencies in bylaw and policy including numbering and format (these will be corrected) and application of dog rules in shopping centres (e.g. Plimmerton)

Dogs in shopping centres

59. The current rule for designated shopping centres (Cannons Creek, Waitangirua, Mana, Whitby, Plimmerton, Titahi Bay, Porirua City Centre) is that dogs are prohibited unless they are working dogs (particularly assistance dogs) or walked on leash directly through these areas or to and from a veterinary clinic.
60. Dog hitching posts or clips have been installed in the Plimmerton Shopping Centre as part of village planning. This requires the rules for dogs in shopping centres to be reconsidered. The options are to retain the existing prohibited conditions for dogs in designated shopping centres or allow dogs to be similarly leashed in all suburban shopping centres. This would not apply to Porirua City Centre as there are city centre use and redevelopment considerations. This change would be provided that the dog is kept under control, does not become a nuisance, is prevented from entering premises (apart from working assistance dogs) and owners immediately clean up and appropriately dispose of any dog faeces.

Recommendation: Either -

- Retain the existing prohibited conditions for dogs in shopping centres (Cannons Creek, Waitangirua, Mana, Whitby, Plimmerton, Titahi Bay, Porirua City Centre) unless walked on leash directly through these areas or to and from a veterinary clinic **OR**
- Allow dogs to be under control on leash by the owner or dog handler or safely tethered, in all suburban shopping centres (not Porirua City Centre) provided the dog does not become a nuisance, is prevented from entering premises (apart from working assistance dogs) and owners immediately clean up and appropriately dispose of any dog faeces.

FENCED DOG PARK

61. Following public and social media discussion over the last 12 months and submissions to the annual plan, it was considered useful to include opportunity for feedback on the idea of a fenced dog park for Porirua during consultation on dog rules.
62. There was broad support (94% - 84 of 89) for the idea of a fenced dog park in Porirua. In general, those in support considered it an important city facility, particularly in light of the level of dog fees. Dogs can run free in a safe environment (for dogs and people), socialise with other dogs and for owners to meet and provide support and encouragement to be responsible dog owners.
63. Other points included being a reasonable size, needing rubbish bins, fresh water, and located in the right place. Some suggested several fenced parks.³ General rates funding was most popular with a mix of general rates, user pays and sponsorship. A summary of the issues, opportunities and feedback is in Attachment 1. It is proposed that consideration of a fenced dog park, with further assessment and use of the recent feedback, is included in the development of the Long-term Plan 2018-38 for wider public consultation.

Recommendation: include options for a fenced dog park in the development of the Long-term Plan 2018-38.

CONCLUSION

64. The Dog Control Bylaw must be reviewed and adopted by 21 September 2017. Some practical changes can be made. There are other proposals and issues requiring further consideration and

³ There is currently discussion of a fenced dog park in Ascot Park as part of village planning.

consultation as appropriate. There is also sufficient support to consider including options for a fenced dog park in the development of the Long-term Plan 2018-38 for wider consultation.

Report prepared by: Stuart Parkinson
POLICY ADVISOER, POLICY, PLANNING AND REGULATORY SERVICES

Report approved by: James Jefferson
GENERAL MANAGER, POLICY, PLANNING AND REGULATORY SERVICES

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The issues in this report contribute to the strategic priorities of:

- Children and young people at the centre of city decisions
- A healthy and protected harbour and catchment
- A growing, prosperous and regionally connected city
- A great village and city experience

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Fenced dog park

A fenced dog park has not been budgeted and financial implications will need to be prepared for wider public consultation among the Council's priorities, commitments and work programme in the development of the Long-term Plan 2018-38. This will need to include funding sources (rates, sponsorship etc) and proportions, options for staged development, location and fencing requirements and other features.

Signs

The review of the adequacy and location of signs relating to on leash and off leash dog areas will be met initially from existing budgets for signs renewal, with further budget to be considered for inclusion in the development of the Long-term Plan 2018-38.

Fees

Dog registration fees are dealt with through the annual plan process. The fee structure, method for calculation and discounts for responsible owners will continue to be considered with appropriate supporting information to owners.

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

The Dog Control Bylaw review must be reviewed using the special consultative procedure in the Local Government Act 2002. The bylaw needs to be reviewed and adopted by 21 September 2017. If not, under the bylaw provisions of the Act, the bylaw is revoked and a new bylaw would need to be adopted. The ideal is not to have any break in the continuity of the bylaw and its provisions.

TREATY CONSIDERATIONS

Treaty implications in relation to the issues in this report relates to the appropriate control and clean up after dogs around sites of cultural significance and near Māori communities in general.

For example, all waterfront properties in Hongoeka, whether residential sections or coastal blocks, cross the formed road and continue down to mean high water, meaning that the beach is private property. Public walking access around the western coast from Hongoeka, north to Pukerua Bay, is provided by the generosity of the Hongoeka landowners, so management of dogs on leash by their owners walking the foreshore is essential. Other sites of importance for management of dogs on leash include urupa and launching sites for waka ama such as Onepoto and the Wi Neera Drive site.

PCC #4910732

SIGNIFICANCE

The issues in this paper involve the following aspects of the Council's Significance and Engagement Policy: the Council's strategic direction; community interest; and affected individuals and groups.

ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS

Any changes to dog rules need to be communicated clearly to dog owners and non-dog owners. This includes publicity material, web and social media publication, and information with dog registration reminders. Decisions for major change require a good evidence base and consultation. Of particular importance is information about on and off leash dog requirements including off leash exercise areas and prohibited areas. This needs to be supported by clear descriptions and maps.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 - Summary of views: Submissions on the Review of the Dog Control Policy and Bylaw and Feedback on the Idea of a Fenced Dog Park #5068300
- Attachment 2 – All submissions on the Dog Control Policy and Bylaw and Idea of a Fenced Dog Park #5095623
- Attachment 3 – Social media comments on the proposed changes to the Dog Control Policy and Bylaw and Idea of a Fenced Dog Park #5096715
- Attachment 4 – Proposed Dog Control Policy #5105291
- Attachment 5 – Proposed Dog Control Bylaw #5103617
- Attachment 6 - Maps for Dog Exercise Areas, Prohibited Areas, Removal and Changes
- Attachment 7 – General Dog Statistics for Porirua #5101405