

REPORT

Date : 4 August 2020

To : Ordinary Council Meeting, 25 August 2020

From : Planning and Regulatory Group Manager, Gerard McCormack

Subject : **DOG CONTROL POLICIES AND PRACTICES REPORT 2019-2020**

File ID : A203381

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council is required to publicly report on its dog control policies and practices each financial year under section 10A of the Dog Control Act. A copy of the annual report is to be submitted to the Secretary for Local Government. The annual report for the 2019-20 financial year is attached.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with the annual report setting out Council's dog control practices for the year 2019-20. Following receipt by Council, the annual report will be submitted to the Secretary for Local Government. The annual report is included in appendix 01 attached.

BACKGROUND

The Dog Control Act requires territorial authorities to publicly report on dog control policy and practices under section 10A of the Dog Control Act.

Section 10A of the Dog Control Act 1996 states that the report "*.....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."*

Section 10A(3) specifies that *"the territorial authority must give public notice of the report in one (1) or more daily newspapers circulating in the territorial authority district."*

Section 10A(4) requires the Council, *"within one month after adopting the report, to send a copy of it to the Secretary for Local Government"*.

DISCUSSION

The attached report summarises the key information requirements set out in the Dog Control Act in terms of reporting. Also included below are some of the key statistics for the financial year, and reasoning for any notable changes. More generally, Animal Control staff continue to be proactive within the community. They undertake daily patrols, respond to service requests and look after the pound. They also spend time with customers on a one-on-one basis talking about the responsibilities of individual dog owners.

During this financial year, Council worked with the Department of Conservation regarding the change in classification for hunting dogs, to be classified as working dogs rather than a complete dog. It required that for these dogs to be considered working dogs they must undertake avian awareness and aversion training, providing more protection for the native wildlife that is found in the Ōpōtiki bush. This initiative gave incentive for hunters to register their dogs, as well as ensuring that kiwi, weka, whio and other ground nesting birds have a higher chance of survival when coming into contact with these dogs.

Statistical analysis

- 1545 dogs were registered during this financial year which is the second highest number of dogs ever registered in the district.

Animal Control Officers phoned dog owners in June-September 2019 to remind them to re-register their dogs to avoid penalties being applied. This resulted in the lowest number of people being fined for failing to register their dogs, and is an initiative we have continued during the current registration period.

- 61 dogs were rehomed during this financial year which represents 28% of all dogs impounded and is the highest number of dogs rehomed within a financial year.

This year we had the highest number of dogs rehomed in any previous financial year, providing proof that the de-sexing program has had a continual positive impact on those dogs impounded in the area as there is less dangerous and menacing dogs. We continue to work alongside the SPCA in rehoming these dogs through their website.

- 211 dogs were impounded, and 38% of these dogs were euthanised. This is the lowest percentage ever recorded during a financial year, down from 52% in 2018-19 and 64% in the 2017-18 financial year.

The de-sexing programme has reduced the amount of unwanted litters of menacing and dangerous dogs being left at the pound. Additionally, there has been an improvement in rehoming rates and increases in return of dogs to owners. Both result in a significant reduction in the number of dogs that have needed to be euthanised in this financial year.

- 71 dogs impounded were returned to their owners which is the highest percentage of dogs returned to owners following impoundment ever recorded within a financial year.

Following Council incentives to micro-chip all dogs registered prior to 1 August for free and public education campaigns about micro-chipping dogs, the number of dogs micro-chipped in the district has increased making it easier for officers to return impounded dogs to their owners.

- No dogs were broken out from the pound during this financial year.

This provides proof that the CCTV cameras installed in the previous financial year have been successful in deterring any break outs or thefts.

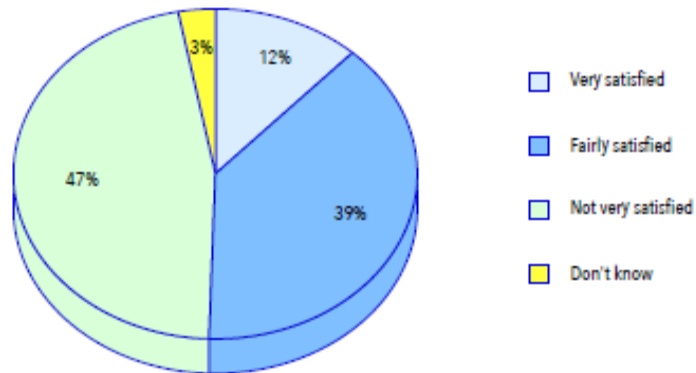
Council undertakes an annual satisfactory survey which includes a question around whether the responder was very/fairly satisfied with Animal Control. Results for the last five years are presented below:

2019-20	2018-19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16
51%	59%	55%	51%	55%

This year we have 51% satisfaction (fairly to very satisfied) with the Animal Control service, highlighting that Animal Control is a significant issue within the district. Public feedback identifies there are issues with roaming and uncontrolled dogs, as well as response times.

iii. Animal control, including roaming dogs

Overall



SIGNIFICANCE ASSESSMENT

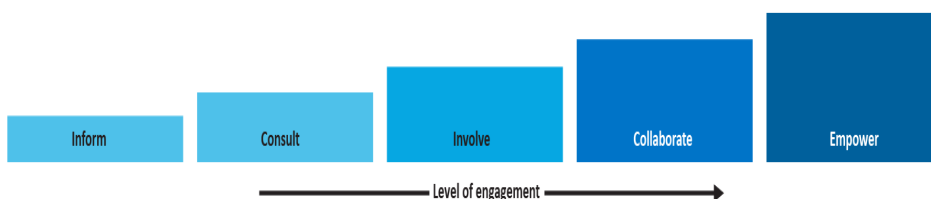
Assessment of significance

Under Council's Significance and Engagement Policy, on every issue requiring a decision, Council considers the degree of significance and the corresponding level of engagement required. The level of Significance for the Dog Control Policies and Practices Report 2019-20 is considered to be low as determined by the criteria set out in section 12 of the Significance and Engagement Policy.

Assessment of engagement requirements

The Dog Control Act 1996 requires Council to report on dog control policy and practices each year. Public notification of the report is required in one or more daily newspapers circulating within the district. Council must also, within one month of adopting the report, send a copy of it to the Secretary of Local Government.

As the level of significance for the Dog Control Policies and Practices Report 2019-20 is considered to be of low significance, the level of engagement required is determined to be at the level of inform according to Schedule 2 of the Significance and Engagement Policy.



CONCLUSION

The work of the Animal Control team has resulted in improvements in a number of our statistical reporting measures during this financial year. Dog Control is an activity of Council that will always require a proactive approach to ensure that dog owners fulfil their responsibilities under the Dog Control Act, in particular to ensure that their dogs are registered, and to ensure dogs do not wander and therefore reducing the likelihood of attacks.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. That the report titled "Dog Control Policies and Practices Report 2019-20" be received.**
- 2. That the Dog Control Policies and Practices Report 2019-20 attached in Appendix 01 be adopted by Council and its availability publicly notified in the Ōpōtiki News in accordance with Section 10A(3) of the Dog Control Act.**
- 3. That the Dog Control Policies and Practices Report 2019-20 attached in Appendix 01 be filed with the Secretary for Local Government (Department of Internal Affairs) in accordance with section 10A(4) of the Dog Control Act.**

Gerard McCormack

PLANNING AND REGULATORY GROUP MANAGER



Opotiki District Council Dog Control Policies and Practices Report 2019-20

Section 10A report in accordance with the Dog Control Act 1996

1 Introduction

Opotiki District Council, as a Territorial Authority, is required to manage and enforce the provisions of the Dog Control Act 1996.

This report is to meet the requirements set under Section 10A of that Act which requires Council to report on its dog control policy and practices.

This report contains information and statistics on the Council's dog control activity for financial year 2020 (1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020).

2 Dog Policy, Objectives and Practices – Section 10A (1) (a)

Opotiki District Council has a Dog Policy, dated 9 November 2004 with the objectives being:

- Minimising the danger, distress and nuisance of dogs to the community generally
- Separating children and dogs in public places
- Enabling, to the extent that is practicable, the public to use streets and public amenities without fear of attack or intimidation by dogs
- The exercise and recreational needs of dogs and their owners

High priority objectives are identified as:

- The need to reduce the number of dogs roaming the streets
- The need to decrease the amount of uncontrolled breeding that occurs

Dog registration and fees are charged annually and used to fund Council's dog control functions along with rates funding given the wider public benefit that is derived by keeping the community safe.

APPENDIX 01

3 Summary of Practices – Section 10A (1) (b)

The Animal control function forms part of the Planning and Regulatory Group of Council.

During the reporting period Council has had 1.5FTE officers dedicated to Dog Control, with officers' also managing horse and stock control. The number of full time employees under animal control has decreased from 2.5FTE in 2018-19 by one full time employee.

Limited afterhours support is provided by Independent Security Consultants Ltd (ISCL).

The Opotiki Town Centre is patrolled at least three times a day. The purpose of these patrols is to identify non-compliance with the Dog Control Act, the Dog Control Bylaw and Policy. In this reporting period there have also been some after-hour patrols undertaken.

The patrols are also an opportunity to get out into the community and talk to dog owners about their responsibilities on an individual basis.

Patrols are also carried out to include the wider Opotiki Township, Woodlands and East Coast settlements such as Te Kaha, Waihau Bay, Ohiwa, Bryan's Beach and Paerata Ridge. East of Te Kaha patrols are undertaken on an as needed basis often through a Service Request or via N.Z. Police.

Funding has been approved by Council for the de-sexing dogs classified as dangerous or menacing within the district and also to have all dogs micro-chipped before 1 August 2020, for free. The proven success of the de-sexing scheme has resulted in less dangerous/menacing dogs in the pound and, in turn, a higher number of dogs able to be rehomed.

APPENDIX 01

4 Dog Control Statistics

Section 10A (2) information

The following information is required under section 10A (2) clauses a –g.

	2019-20	2018-19	2017-18	2016-17	2015-16
a. Registered Dogs	1545	1591	1463	1461	1580
b. Probationary owners	0	0	0	0	0
c. Dogs classified as dangerous	8	6	5	8	6
d. Dogs classified as menacing	35	28	33	85	54
e. Number of Infringements issued	61	91	100	96	139
f. Number of service requested	256	357	328	332	393
g. Number of Prosecutions	0	0	0	0	0

Pound Statistics

The table below shows the activity at the pound over the last five years:

Activity	2019-20	2018-19	2017-18	2016-17	2015-16
Dogs euthanized	79 (38%)	206 (52%)	181 (64%)	280 (66%)	294 (66%)
Dogs stolen from pound	0	3	1	5	1
Dogs returned to owner	71 (34%)	128 (32%)	87 (31%)	98 (23%)	95 (21%)
Dogs rehomed	61 (28%)	60 (15%)	14 (5%)	39 (9%)	54 (12%)
Dogs impounded	211	397	283	422	444

APPENDIX 01

Infringement notices

There were 61 infringement notices issued by the Animal Control Officers over the 2019-20 year.

Details are as follows:

Type of Infringement	2019-20	2018-19	2017-18	2016-17	2015-16
Failure to register Dog	52	72	85	72	91
Failure to keep dog under control	9	13	11	23	43
Wilful Obstruction of dog control officer or ranger	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Failure to comply with effects of classification of dog as dangerous dog	Nil	6	1	1	3
Failure to comply with a Bylaw	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Falsely notifying death of a dog	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	1
Wilfully providing false information about a dog	Nil	Nil	1	Nil	1
Failure to implant microchip	Nil	Nil	2	Nil	Nil
TOTAL	61	91	100	96	139

Customer Service Requests

Animal Control related service requests continue to decline as shown in the following table:

Service request type	2019-20	2018-19	2017-18	2016-17	2015-16
Dog Control	265	357	328	332	393