



WAIROA DISTRICT COUNCIL

Dog Control Policy 2011

Person Responsible:	Regulatory Manager	File Reference:	A.04.11/ 1.09
Category:	Regulatory	Status:	FINAL
Date Policy Adopted:	13 September 2011	Approval By:	Council
Review Period:	As required	Next Review Due By:	2016

PART I REASON FOR THE POLICY

Section 10 of the Dog Control Act 1996 requires every territorial authority to adopt a policy in respect of dogs within its District and requires the policy to be reviewed at least every five years.

Policy and Bylaw Review Process

The Council has previously determined that it is necessary to have controls on dogs in addition to the controls provided by the Dog Control Act 1996, and a Bylaw is the most appropriate means of achieving this.

Section 10AA of the Dog Control Act 1996 requires the Dog Control Policy to be reviewed, if after a review of its Dog Control Bylaw, the territorial authority considers the Bylaw should be amended, revoked or replaced.

The Dog Control Bylaw is required to be reviewed in accordance with sections 158 and 159 of the Local Government Act 2002. If after the review process the territorial authority considers that the Bylaw should be amended, revoked or replaced, the proposed Bylaw must be open to public consultation in accordance with the Special Consultative Procedure set out in section 86 of the Act. The proposed Bylaw changes will therefore be open to public submission and submitters have the opportunity to appear before the Council in support of their submissions.

PART II

PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to provide a practical framework for the care and control of dogs throughout the Wairoa District in order to minimise any danger, distress or nuisance caused by dogs to the community in general.

The policy aims to integrate control measures passed through the Dog Control Act 1996 (including all amendments), and Council's Bylaws together with targeted education to modify the behaviour of both dogs and their owners to avoid nuisance situations.

The expected outcomes to be achieved as a result of this policy are:

1. Effective dog control practices and the proper control of dogs at all times
2. Minimise the risk of dog attacks
3. Ensure appropriate levels of monitoring and enforcement of dog control legislation

Council acknowledges it will never succeed in controlling all potential dog problems however it believes that by formulating a Dog Control Policy it can encourage owners to make better provision for the control and care of their dogs and clarify why it undertakes Dog Control functions, the way those functions are undertaken and how it intends to make changes to continually improve the service.

PART III

DOG CONTROL ACTIVITY

ROLE AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

The primary focus of Wairoa District Council's Dog Control services is to provide a cost effective and professional service through monitoring, compliance and enforcement activities. Council's principal involvement in dog control is in response to the legislative obligations set out in the Dog Control Act 1996. This includes:

- The maintenance of the National Dog Database and the registration of dogs within the District, including the identification and processing of unregistered dogs.
- Providing a dog ranging service and facilities for the impounding and care of stray and seized animals.
- Providing public education on dog control ownership and safety.
- Providing a compliant investigation and resolution service, including an after hours service.
- Classifying specified breeds of dogs as dangerous or menacing.
- Microchipping specified dogs.
- Monitoring and enforcing the provisions of the Dog Control Act and Council's Dog Control Bylaw.

The legislation sets out Council's and dog owners' responsibilities. The Council's approach to dog control is one of assisting owners to understand their responsibilities, rewarding those owners who exercise good control of their dogs and taking any necessary action against those who do not meet their obligations.

PLANNING AND BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK

The Long Term Plan identifies the total financial commitments, broad work programmes and overall funding requirements for Council activities.

At an operational level the Bylaw Compliance Activity Plan identifies in detail financial and funding requirements for Council's Dog Control unit and more detailed work programmes and targets and outputs.

Bylaws of the Wairoa District Council are designed to support the Dog Control Policy.

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POLICY 1: BYLAWS

1.1 The Council is empowered under the Local Government Act 2002 and the Dog Control Act 1996 to make and enforce Bylaws for the following purposes:

- Prescribing minimum standards for the accommodation of dogs.
- Regulating and controlling dogs.
- Requiring dogs to be on-lead at all times in public places
- Defining prohibited, on-lead areas and off-lead or exercise areas.
- Requiring owners to immediately remove faeces left by their dog(s) defecating in public places.
- Providing for breeding kennels and breeding of dogs.
- Requiring bitches 'in season' to be confined.
- Providing for the impounding of dogs.
- Limiting the number of dogs that may be kept.
- Providing for the licensing of additional dogs, or

Any other purpose that from time to time Council deems necessary or desirable to further control dogs.

Explanation:

The Local Government Act 2002 (sections 158 and 159) requires bylaws to be reviewed every five years. Therefore provisions for controlling dogs, may be reviewed, amended or introduced at any time in response to changing legislative requirements or community needs.

POLICY 2: CONTROL OF DOGS

- 2.1** Owners must ensure that their dogs are under the direct control of a person at all times and in all public areas physically restrained by a leash or lead or are confined so that they cannot freely leave the owners property.
- 2.2** Owners are permitted to exercise their dogs in designated off-lead exercise area providing the owners are able to control their dogs by command (including voice command, hand signals or whistlings(and they carry at all times a leash or lead.
- 2.3** Council shall impound any dog found not under control or at large or off-lead when in a public area, except as provided for in 2.2 above.
- 2.4** At all times dogs shall be confined on private property so that they cannot freely leave the property and are provided with adequate shelter and in conditions that do not give rise to a nuisance, distress or cause any suffering to the dog or any person.
- 2.5** If a dog is suffering from an infectious disease or is in season ('on heat'), the dog must be confined to and exercising must be carried out on, the owner's property.
- 2.6** No more than two (2) dogs over the age of three (3) months may be housed on an individual property other than in rural areas. This number may only be exceeded with the written consent of Council.

Explanation:

Dogs that are not kept confined to the property, on which they reside especially in urban environments, can cause annoyance, distress, nuisance and danger to individual persons in the community when not under direct physical control by being on a leash or lead. When dogs are not under control they can be threatening and a hazard to traffic and road users.

The extent of any nuisance is often related to the number of dogs being kept, the size and nature of the dogs and the size and location of the property on which they are being kept. It is also recognised that many problems occur due to loneliness or boredom of any individual dog. Dogs that are diseased or in season (on heat) can also have a disruptive influence on other dogs. Council recognises that breeding and boarding establishments will require the opportunity to retain more than two dogs.

POLICY 3: CARE OF DOGS

- 3.1** Dog owners shall be required to keep their dogs in clean and hygienic conditions and maintain appropriate facilities for the housing and care of dogs in a good state of repair.
- 3.2** Council may prohibit the keeping of dogs on properties that can result in a nuisance or a health risk being generated.

Explanation:

Dog ownership carries with it responsibilities to provide proper care, attention and facilities. Failure to do so can lead to unhealthy conditions for the dog and give rise to nuisance to neighbours through odours, vermin and pests and noise from dogs barking or howling.

(Note: Bylaws define the standards for the care and keeping of dogs).

POLICY 4: DOG HOSPITAL, BOARDING AND BREEDING KENNELS

- 4.1** Dog hospitals, boarding or breeding kennels shall only be established on sites approved by the Council subject to such conditions as may be reasonably imposed. In addition, a Resource Consent may be required under the Resource Management Act 1991.

Explanation:

Council recognises that keeping of dogs can give rise to business opportunities. There will always be a need for dog care centres and boarding establishments for the supply of dogs for pets, breeding and show purposes. These activities can have a detrimental effect on adjoining properties where sitings are ill conceived or facilities and conditions are not adequate.

POLICY 5: DOG DEFECATION

- 5.1** Owners are required to immediately remove their dog faeces from public places or private land not belonging to the dog owner and daily from their own property.

Explanation:

Dog excrement harbours disease and parasitic infection as well as being unsightly and unpleasant when deposited in public places or on private property.

POLICY 6: IMPOUNDING OF DOGS

- 6.1** Any dog in breach of these Policies and Bylaws, may be impounded and held until claimed by the owner, sold or destroyed or disposed of as Council sees fit if not claimed by its owner within seven days.
- 6.2** Impounded dogs shall only be released when proof of ownership has been established, upon payment of registration where applicable, and upon payment of all other fees and charges generally.
- 6.3** Any dog impounded will be microchipped before being released.
- 6.4** It shall be unlawful to remove any dog from the pound or from a Council vehicle without the approval of a Council officer.

Explanation:

*Council will normally open the pound by arrangement between:
9 am till 4 pm Monday to Friday.*

Dogs impounded by Council are primarily due to a breach of the Bylaws and will incur a cost to Council in catching, collecting, housing and feeding the dogs as well as for the administration of impounded dogs.

It is important that impounded dogs are returned to their correct owners as soon as possible and that costs are fully recovered to ensure that costs do not become a burden on ratepayers.

POLICY 7: DOG SALES

- 7.1** All dogs sold from the pound shall be registered and microchipped prior to release, and shall not be released until payment of the purchase fee.
- 7.2** The sale of any dog shall be conditional upon a satisfactory report from the Dog Control Officer, Dog Ranger or duly authorised officer of Council that the property where it will be kept is suitable for the purpose.
- 7.3** Dogs shall only be sold following the acceptance by the purchaser through a signed disclaimer that Council shall not be held responsible for the health of the dog or any claim by a previous owner.
- 7.4** Dogs deemed to be unsuitable for rehoming, will not be made available for sale to the public.
- 7.5** Reasonable efforts shall be made to promote the sale of suitable dogs before they are destroyed.
- (a) Proof of ownership and identity of the dog is established; and
 - (b) In the case of any dog three or more months of age, the current annual registration fee payable under the Dog Control Act 1996 is paid unless such fee has previously been paid;
 - (c) Any dog three or more months of age where the dog is registered or unregistered and impounded by the Council, the dog shall be microchipped prior to release.

Explanation:

The Dog Control Act requires that a territorial authority may sell, destroy or otherwise dispose of an impounded dog only after the expiration of seven days. As dog sales would provide some cost recovery, they should be pursued with responsible owners and with proper undertakings being put into place.

Charges for all dogs sold should recover the cost of registration and microchipping and seek to ensure responsible ownership while also being set at a level which will not deter the purchase.

POLICY 8: RELINQUISHMENT OF DOGS

- 8.1** The Council shall accept at its discretion unwanted dogs into the pound, for disposal either by sale or euthanasia for a fee and upon receipt of a declaration of release from the owner.
- 8.2** Dogs may be accepted for relinquishment, as a means of resolving a complaint, for a fee and upon receipt of a declaration of release from the owner.
- 8.3** The service shall be provided without any privileges, concessions or offerings being made to the owner.

Explanation:

Owners may voluntarily relinquish a dog in order to resolve a problem and when they have accepted responsibility for a complaint received by the Dog Control Officer, Dog Ranger or a Council authorised under the Dog Control Act 1996.

To prevent the release of unwanted dogs into the community, the Council will accept dogs into the pound for disposal, in appropriate circumstances, including when an owner can no longer care for or afford to keep a dog. However care must be taken with these decisions and owners should be directed to use vets in the first instance.

POLICY 9: IMPOUNDING FEES

- 9.1** Payment of impounding fees shall be required from all dog owners prior to release of a dog from the pound.
- 9.2** The fees shall be set at a level so as not to discourage the retrieval of a dog from the pound providing the actual and reasonable costs incurred by Council can be met.
- 9.3** The fees shall increase to impose a greater penalty element for any subsequent impounding of that same dog.
- 9.4** No unregistered dog or dog impounded shall be released until payment of registration and microchipping fees has been made.
- 9.5** Sustenance charges shall be set to recover all the costs of feeding, housing and caring for dogs in the pound

Explanation:

The majority of impoundings are caused by dogs wandering at large. Some are seized following an offence under the Dog Control Act 1996 by which seizure is an option. In general, impounding of wandering dogs reflects a lack of the responsibility by dog owners and the actual and reasonable cost of recovery should follow user-pays principles. Payment of impounding costs shall therefore squarely lie with the owner of that dog and not the ratepayer.

Revenue collected shall reflect the actual and reasonable cost of the time involved in the recovery, the cost of transport, the provision of food, veterinary care, microchipping, shelter and maintenance of the pound. The charge shall also reflect the imposition of a penalty for a breach of Council's Dog Control Bylaw.

All registered dogs impounded must be microchipped prior to release, in accordance with section 69A(4) of the Dog Control Act 1996.

POLICY 10: DANGEROUS DOGS

10.1 Council shall classify dangerous dogs, in accordance with the provisions of the Dog Control Act 1996.

10.2 The owner of a dangerous dog shall:

- A) Be given notice of the dog's classification in writing.
- B) Be allowed to object to the classification and be heard by Council in a hearing (subject to the payment of any hearing fees and charges).
- C) Be given notice of Council's decision on any objection and the reasons for that decision as soon as practicable.
- D) Comply with the requirements of the Dog Control Act 1996 to keep the dog securely fenced within a portion of the owner's property so that it is not necessary to enter the secured area in order to obtain access to any dwelling on the property.
- E) Comply with the requirements of the Dog Control Act 1996 to ensure that the dog is not at large or in any public place or private way unless confined completely within a vehicle or caged or muzzled and controlled on a leash or lead.
- F) The dog must also be neutered.
- G) Pay a surcharge of 150% on dog control fees.
- H) Not dispose of the dog to any other person without Council's written approval.
- I) Shall advise any person in possession of the dangerous/menacing dog of the requirement to muzzle, cage, and leash the dog when in public.
- J) Shall ensure that the dog is microchipped.

Explanation:

Section 31 of the Dog Control Act 1996, allows the territorial authority to classify dogs as dangerous.

Council will penalise the owners of dangerous dogs in order to indicate to the public generally that aggressive or threatening dogs, that may pose a risk to the safety of people or other animals, and to create a regulatory requirement for more responsible ownership.

POLICY 11: MENACING DOGS

- 11.1** Council may classify menacing dogs in accordance with the provisions of the Dog Control Act 1996.
- 11.2** The owner of a menacing dog shall:
- A. Be given written notice of the dog's classification.
 - B. Be allowed to object to the classification and be heard by Council in a hearing (subject to the payment of any hearing fees and charges).
 - C. Be given notice of Council's decision on any objection and the reasons for that decision as soon as practicable.
 - D. Comply with the requirements of the Dog Control Act 1996 to keep the dog muzzled and/or caged and controlled on a leash or lead when in a public place or private way.
 - E. The dog must also be neutered.
 - F. Advise any person in possession of the menacing dog of the requirement to muzzle/cage the dog when in public.
 - G. Ensure that the dog is microchipped.
- 11.3** Council must classify dogs belonging to the breed or type, listed in Schedule 4 of the Dog Control Act 1996 as menacing.

Explanation:

Section 33A of the Dog Control Act 1996, allows the territorial authority to classify dogs as menacing. Furthermore section 33C requires that Council must classify the breeds or types in Schedule 4 of the Dog Control Act 1996 as menacing.

Council will penalise the owners of menacing dogs in order to indicate to the public generally that aggressive or threatening dogs, that may pose a risk to the safety of people or other animals, and to create a regulatory requirement for more responsible ownership.

POLICY 12: MICROCHIPPING

- 12.1** In accordance with the Dog Control Act 1996, Council will ensure that systems are in place to provide information to the National Dog Control Information Database.
- 12.2** Any dogs registered for the first time, excluding dogs registered as Working Dogs, will be microchipped.
- 12.3** Dogs classified as dangerous or menacing on or after 1 December 2003 will be microchipped.
- 12.4** Any registered or unregistered dog impounded that has not been microchipped will be microchipped before being released.
- 12.5** Owners of dogs will be given the choice of having their dog microchipped by Council or providing a vet certificate as proof that their dog has been microchipped.
- 12.6** A fee will be charged to cover the microchipping and administration costs incurred by Council. The fee will be reviewed annually

Explanation:

Section 36A of the Dog Control Act 1996, requires dogs to be provided with a permanent identification. Dogs registered as Working Dogs under the Dog Control Act 1996 are exempt from microchipping requirements.

Microchipping will ensure that dogs can be permanently and easily identified, provide a secure link to their owner and will also facilitate the reuniting of the dog with its owner in instances where it has strayed from its property.

POLICY 13: PROHIBITED AREAS

13.1 Dogs are prohibited from the following areas:

- a) Wairoa District Council Buildings, public libraries, public swimming pools/paddling pools;
- b) Children's playing areas under the control of the Wairoa District Council;
- c) All areas under the control of the Wairoa District Council set aside for organised games or sports;
- d) Any other areas as Council deems necessary and which will be publicly notified and sign-posted accordingly.

Explanation:

Council recognises that there are areas in the city where the presence of a dog is undesirable such as;

- a) Areas of high activity used by people in pursuit of sporting or recreational activities;*
- b) Areas where dog fouling would have a higher chance of causing a health risk;*
- c) Areas where the presence of dogs threaten the peace or comfort of those present.*

POLICY 14: ON-LEAD AREAS

14.1 Dogs shall only be allowed in the following areas while under continuous direct physical control by its owner or responsible person by way of an effective lead or being carried in a vehicle while tethered to the vehicle.

- a) Streets within any residential or commercial area and all public places within these.
- b) All public parks, carparks, public reserves and parts of parks and reserves under the control of Council which are neither prohibited areas, off lead areas or exercise areas.

Explanation:

In many cases dogs form an integral part of family life or offer companionship to their owners. While it is desirable to prohibit dogs in areas of high public usage, it is recognised that socialising is an inherent requirement for both owners and dogs. In such cases it will be necessary for dogs to be under more stringent control by the use of a leash or enclosure in a vehicle. Constraint via a leash will enable:

- a) Visits to shops providing exercise for both owner and dog.*
- b) Ensure proper control in areas of high activity.*
- c) Enable fouling to be immediately recognised and cleaned up.*
- d) Enable secure tethering of the dog when momentarily left unattended.*

POLICY 15: OFF-LEAD EXERCISE AREAS

- 15.1** Private properties with suitable means of containment of the dogs shall be declared an OFF-LEAD exercise area.
- 16.2** Council may from time to time designate dog OFF-LEAD exercise areas.
- 16.3** Any such public places, specifically identified by Council, will be notified to the public and sign-posted accordingly.

Explanation:

Council has a legal requirement to have regard to;

- a) The exercise and recreational needs of dogs under section 10(6) of the Dog Control Act 1996 in that the Council must give effect to a policy by making a bylaw. However is it noted that this policy does not mandatorily require the designation of OFF-LEAD Exercise Areas.*
- b) The need to minimise danger, distress and nuisance to the community generally would be met if areas where dogs may be exercised at large were specifically provided. This would not only allow dog owners' freedom areas but signal to the public generally to expect the presence of dogs in those areas.*

However, Council does recognise that it may not be practical or enforceable to require dogs at all time to be on lead and/or leash control.

Dog owners however have a responsibility to ensure that animals do not cause a nuisance, run amongst traffic and to remove and appropriately dispose of any dog faeces. Any dog off a lead must therefore be kept under continual surveillance and be responsive by verbal calls, hand signals, whistles or other commands from the owner or person responsible for or in charge of the dog at any time.

POLICY 16: PROBATIONARY OWNERS

16.1 Council shall adopt a classification of probationary owners in accordance with the Dog Control Act 1996. A probationary owner shall;

- A) Be given notice of the classification as soon as possible in writing;
- B) Be allowed to object to a classification and be heard by Council in a hearing (subject to the payment of any hearing fees and charges);
- C) Be so classified for 24 months unless terminated earlier;
- D) Not own a dog other than those they already own;
- E) Pay a surcharge of 50% on all Dog Control fees payable;
- F) Pay a surcharge of 5% of annual Dog Control fees for each month of any part year the classification applies;
- G) Dispose of any unregistered dog in their possession;
- H) Be so classified over the whole of New Zealand.

16.2 In accordance with the Dog Control Amendment Act 2003, a “probationary owner” may also be required to undertake a dog owner education programme or a dog obedience course (or both).

Explanation:

Section 21 of the Dog Control Act 1996 allows the territorial authority to classify owners as probationary owners if they are convicted of any offence against the Dog Control Act, or other Acts or they commit three or more infringement offences within 24 months.

This policy aims to indicate to the public generally that poor dog control is not acceptable and to create a regulatory requirement for more responsible ownership. Irresponsible dog owners should be penalised for their actions.

POLICY 17 DISQUALIFICATION OF AN OWNER

17.1 Council shall disqualify dog ownership in accordance with the Dog Control Act 1996.

17.2 A disqualified owner shall;

- A) Be given notice of the classification as soon as possible in writing;
- B) Be disqualified for a period decided by the territorial authority up to five years;
- C) Be allowed to object to the disqualifications and be heard by Council in a hearing (subject to the payment of any hearing fees and charges);
- D) Dispose of every dog owned by them and to a person who does not reside with them.
- E) Be so disqualified over the whole of New Zealand.

Explanation:

Section 25 of the Dog Control Act 1996 allows a territorial authority the power to disqualify a person from being an owner of a dog if they are convicted of an offence (not being an infringement offence) against the Dog Control Act 1996 or they are convicted of an offence against Part 1 or Part 2 of the Animal Welfare Act 1999, section 26ZZP of the Conservation Act 1987, or section 561 of the National Parks Act 1980, or they commit three or more infringement offences (not relating to a single incident or occasion) within a continuous period of 24 months.

In order to indicate to the public generally that repeated irresponsibility will lead to severe restriction on dog ownership, the disqualification system provides for Council to restrict ownership of dogs, where required.

POLICY 18 DISABILITY ASSIST DOGS

18.1 Council will promote and encourage access to any public place and registered premises for disability assist dogs.

18.2 In recognition of the value of dogs trained for the public good and where used by people with disabilities, dog registration fees for such dogs shall be set to recover as near practicable the cost for the registration process. Such dogs may include:

- Guide dogs
- Hearing ear dogs
- Dogs kept by the
 - Police
 - Customs Department
 - Ministry of Agriculture
 - Ministry of Fisheries
 - Ministry of Defence
 - Department of Conservation

Explanation:

It is generally recognised that this class of dog poses no risk or problems to the community. The use of dogs to assist people with disabilities warrant special attention and in many cases applying bylaws relating to access would be to deny the rights of disabled persons.

It is also acknowledged that working dogs used for public duties and for assisting people with disabilities are unlikely to present problems. The animals' general demeanour, their housing, location and their use as working animals ensure owner responsibility.

POLICY 19: REGISTRATION FEES

- 19.1** Dog registration fees shall be set to ensure that all costs associated with monitoring, investigation, compliance and general dog control activities are adequately funded.
- 19.2** The funding of the Dog Control operations will be derived from dog owners and the community generally where this is deemed appropriate by Council.
- 19.3** A discount scheme will be provided for those owners who pay on time.
- 19.4** Dog control funds shall be set aside for the sole purpose of funding dog control activities.

Explanation:

Dog registration fees shall be calculated to provide sufficient revenue to fund the service.

Currently Council's funding policy indicates a 10% input from Rates to recognise the Public Good aspect of Dog Control.

The Dog Control Act also requires that all monies received for Dog Control may only be spent on such activities. All excess money shall be placed in the Dog Control reserve account for use in following years.

Time and costs associated with monitoring and compliance activities, investigating complaints, and generally carrying out dog control activities will be reflected in the dog registration fees.

POLICY 20 PERMISSION TO KEEP ADDITIONAL DOGS

- 20.1** A permit is required to keep more than two (2) dogs housed on an urban property. Upon receipt of an application and fee, dog owners will be required to meet all conditions and requirement of section 4 of the Wairoa District Council Dog Control Bylaw 2011, together with the requirements of the permit application.
- 20.2** Any nuisance proven to be caused through having more than two (2) dogs on a property may see the permit revoked.
- 20.3** If the conditions of the permit have not been complied with, Council may revoke the permit.
- 20.4** The fee for the permit to keep more than two (2) dogs shall cover all the inspection and administration costs incurred by Council. The fee will be reviewed annually.

Explanation:

Owners who can demonstrate that they are responsible dog owners and who have suitable facilities, may be granted the opportunity to keep more than 2 dogs in an urban situation.

However this permit shall be subject to owners being able to ensure their dogs are controlled at all times and not causing a nuisance.

Urban property refers to properties in areas zoned as Residential and Settlement.

POLICY 21: OTHER CHARGES

21.1 Fees and charges not specifically provided for shall be set to recover all the costs reasonably incurred by Council.

Explanation:

The Dog Control Act 1996 sets out procedures for replacement tags.

At times the Dog Control Officer, Dog Ranger or Council officer authorised for dog control are called to carry out inspection procedures and other services.

The costs of these materials and/or services to Council shall be fully recovered in accordance with user-pays principles.

POLICY 22: INFRINGEMENT NOTICES

22.1 Council will use infringement notices as provided in the Dog Control Act 1996.

Explanation:

An Infringement Notice, like a parking ticket, is an instant fine and if paid within a certain period of time avoids the need to prosecute through the Court.

An Infringement Notice is only able to be issued for an infringement offence. The offences and fixed fines are specified in the first schedule of the Dog Control Act 1996.

Failure to comply with an Infringement Notice can lead to court proceedings.

The advantage of the Infringement Notice system is the provision of fixed, instant fines with the vagaries of judge's decisions removed. It also allows for the withdrawal of the notice at the discretion of Council Officers. Direct action with an offender reduces the cost of legal advice and infringement fees are retained by Council.

POLICY 23: OWNER AND PUBLIC EDUCATION

23.1 Council will encourage responsible dog ownership through owner education and encouragement to attend obedience and other methods of responsible dog management and control..

23.2 Council will use focus particularly on developing knowledge and good attitude towards dog ownership through public meetings and school promotion programmes, teaching:

- The correct way to approach a dog;
- Responsibilities of dog owners;
- How to read a dog's body language;
- How to behave if an aggressive dog is encountered;
- Basic care of dogs;
- Disease prevention in dogs;
- Correct way to handle a dog;
- How to control a dog;
- How to stop a dog barking to avoid being a nuisance.

Explanation:

Owners who attend obedience courses generally reflect a sensible and caring attitude towards their pets.

Obedient dogs may still wander and be allowed by their owners to contravene a bylaw, foul in public places and cause a nuisance in public.

Through public and school education, people will be given the knowledge to deal with some of the situations and nuisances that they may come in contact with. That education may also lead to a more responsible attitude towards dog ownership in the future.

POLICY 24: COMPLAINTS

24.1 Council shall have in place procedures to enable the public to readily lay complaints regarding dog behaviour.

24.2 The procedures will include methods to:

- record the complaint;
- ensure action is taken by officers;
- ensure that a report on the complaint is completed;
- ensure that the complainant is advised of the outcome;
- provide for a means of review of the actions taken/outcome.

24.3 Complaints will be investigated promptly and within agreed levels of service.

Explanation:

Owners have a responsibility to ensure that their dogs are under control at all times.

If a dog is not under control, the public have the right to report the incident to Council Officers and to expect action to be taken, in a consistent and effective manner.

The public therefore need to be aware of, or have access to, the methods of making their concerns known, how those concerns will be dealt with, what the outcome of their complaint has been, and any rights to have a review of that process undertaken.

POLICY 25: ANNUAL REPORT ON DOG CONTROL POLICY AND PRACTICES

- 25.1** Council is required under Section 10A of the Dog Control Act 1996, to report annually on its policy and practices.
- 25.2** The report is required for each financial year and must cover the administration of –
- its dog control policy
 - its dog control practices
- 25.3** The report must include information relating to:
- the number of registered dogs in the district;
 - the number of probationary owners and disqualified owners in the district;
 - the number of dogs classified as dangerous, and menacing;
 - the number of infringement notices issued;
 - the number of complaints received and the number of prosecutions taken;
- 25.4** A copy of the report must then be sent to the Secretary for Local Government.

Explanation:

Dog control matters are of interest to both dog owners and the general public.

Council has a responsibility to keep the public informed of dog control issues and Section 10A of the Dog Control Act 1996 establishes the process by which this must happen.