



Northumberland

County Council

ASHINGTON AND BLYTH LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE

DATE: 16TH MARCH 2022

Response to Petition for Dogs on Leads at Newbiggin-by-the-Sea Promenade.

Report of: Elizabeth Morgan Interim Executive Director for Public Health and Community Services.

Cabinet Member: Colin Horncastle

Purpose of report

To respond to a recent petition requesting that measures be put in place to require all dogs to be placed on leads while being exercised on Newbiggin-by-the-Sea Promenade.

Recommendations

1. To publicly consult in September 2022 on adding this measure (that dogs must be placed on leads on Newbiggin Promenade) in January 2023 to the existing Northumberland County Council (Dog Control) Public Spaces Protection Order.

Link to Corporate Plan

This report is relevant to the “Keeping Our Communities Safe and Well” priority included in the NCC Corporate Plan 2018-2021

Key issues

1. The petition asks for consideration to be given to a new restriction requiring all dogs to be placed on leads while being walked on Newbiggin by the Sea promenade. The petitioners think this measure should be in place is due to aggressive dogs and unhelpful owners detracting from what should be an enjoyable experience for families and individuals using the promenade.
2. The existing Northumberland County Council (Dog Control) Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) is required to be renewed under statutory provision in January 2023. Before its renewal, public consultation must be undertaken on any existing or proposed measures and it is planned that this consultation will begin September 2022.
3. It is proposed that this request, requiring all dogs being placed on leads while being exercised on Newbiggin-by-the-Sea Promenade be included as part of the proposed consultation.
4. The current PSPO already allows officers to instruct dog owners to put dogs on leads if they think the dog is out of control. There will be heightened patrolling of the Promenade during 2022. This will also assist in building up evidence to support the need for such a measure as proposed by the petitioners.

Background

1. Since 2012 the Council has had a zero-tolerance approach to dog fouling. Any person observed allowing their dog(s) to foul without immediately picking up is (if a first-time offender) issued with a fixed penalty notice. This requires the payment within 14 days but if the offender does not pay the fine (£100 standard) or is a second time offender then the council would prosecute through the courts. The current NCC (Dog Control) Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) makes it an offence to foul any publicly accessible land in Northumberland.
2. The current NCC (Dog Control) Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) only requires dogs to be on leads beside A & B class roads and while in cemeteries/memorial gardens. However, the PSPO also allows Officers who witness poor dog control to order dogs be placed on a lead on any public land. This gives Enforcement Officers the power to direct a dog owner to put their dog on a lead if we feel it is out of control, behaving in a dangerous manner or causing a nuisance but we must be there to see it.
3. The PSPO also has in place a beach exclusion zone for areas of Blyth and Newbiggin Beaches which is enforced between 1st May and 30th September each year.
4. As part of the Green Dog Walker Scheme the Council offer members bags for the safe removal and disposal of dogs faeces. They are available for free at Council offices and are distributed by animal welfare officers during patrols of public spaces. The scheme currently has over 4000 members.

Implications

Policy	Not at this time.
Finance and value for money	New signage will be financed from existing budgets.
Legal	if progressed, proposal would be subject to public consultation and if supported would require the existing Northumberland County Council (Dog Control) Public Spaces Protection Order to be amended by Council.
Procurement	no
Human Resources	no
Property	no
Equalities	Not currently. Before any decision were taken, the proposal would be subject to public consultation.

(Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	
Risk Assessment	no
Crime Disorder &	If the proposal were progressed, it would create an offence, unless a statutory defence existed, of failing to have a dog on a lead within the specified area.
Customer Consideration	The overall aim would be to enhance and improve use and enjoyment of the specified area.
Carbon reduction	no
Health and Wellbeing	The introduction of this addition to the PSPO will improve the mental wellbeing of those individuals for whom out of control dogs provoke anxiety or stress and may promote increased use of this outside space for exercise and recreation for those who may have avoided it due to this issue
Wards	Newbiggin

Authors must ensure that officers and members have agreed the content of the report:

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