

Scrutiny, Enterprise and Wellbeing Group.

Work Programme Item 9

The Control of Dogs and Dog Fouling

Briefing Note - June 2014

Background

This report summarises the work carried out by the Environmental Protection team during the past 18 months, to tackle the effects of irresponsible dog ownership in our parks and on our streets and considers future initiatives.

Why is a review is needed?

Like many other areas there is a high level of interest in dog control issues, both internally and by the public. For many years the Council has used its powers to serve Fixed Penalty Notices for dog fouling offenses.

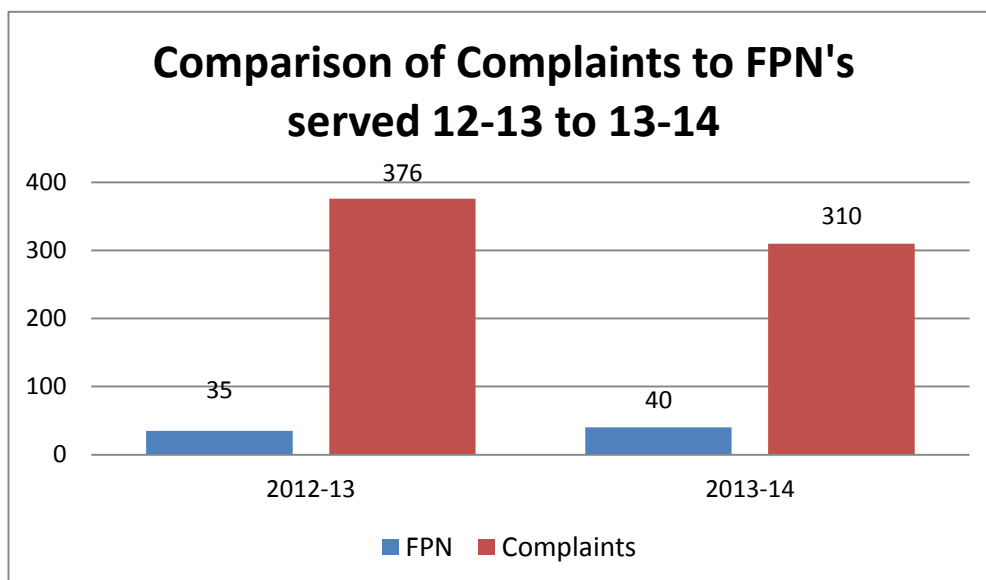
More recently in response to public demand additional Dog Control Orders have been introduced across the borough, to make it an offense to walk dogs off a lead in our cemeteries and the grounds of the crematorium. In Eastwood Park Dog Control Orders were introduced as a pilot to exclude dogs from the children's play area and to require dogs to be kept on leads when asked to do so.

The Antisocial Behaviour Crime and Disorder Act will introduce a new multi-agency framework. In the future Public Space Protection Orders will replace many of the existing orders, used by Local Authorities and the Police, including Dog Control Orders. When the new legislation becomes enacted there will be an opportunity for a wide scale review of dog control across the borough. The legislation also introduces compulsory micro chipping.

Successes

The last year has seen two very positive improvement indicators. The first is from the "Are you being served" survey, where satisfaction rates for both parks and open spaces and street cleaning have improved by 8% and 10% respectively. Less dog fouling in these locations could be a factor in these results.

The second is shown by the decrease in complaints for dog fouling across the borough. It is recognised however that there are areas of the borough that continue to suffer from dog fouling. Most of this happens at night, when poor light makes enforcement on parks impossible. Our enforcement officers undertake a wide range of duties and consequently it is difficult to deploy officers at weekends and during the evening time. Despite this challenge enforcement continues successfully.



Priorities and Objectives for 2014-15

Promotion and education plan.

1 Work with young people.

Schools in the Staveley area are running a poster competition with a clean up after your dog message. The winning posters will be professionally produced as signs to support the Chesterfield "Love Where You Live " campaign, for display on their school playing fields and local parks. Attendances at assemblies have been offered to all secondary schools for the Autumn Term.

2 Events on Parks.

The team will attend 5 of the major park events to give advice and offer micro-chipping. These include Eastwood Park open day, Staveley Forces Day, Queen's Park Party in the Park. Holme-Brook Valley Park and 1other tbc.

3 Yellow Ribbon Campaign.

The Dog Trust Yellow ribbon campaign advocates responsible dog ownership by getting owners of nervous dogs to identify them with a yellow ribbon. We are working with the Park Rangers to promote this campaign.

Enforcement

1 Targeted enforcement

Each moth a program of target enforcement outside of normal working hours, including weekends is being carried out.

2 Engaging with Community Safety the Antisocial Behaviour and Crime And Disorder Act.

The Environmental Protection team has prepared a good practise paper on the control of dogs, it has been presented to Derbyshire Community Safety Team. The team will continue to work with the partnership to help its implementation across Derbyshire.

Next steps

The promotion campaign will run over the summer.
Enforcement will continue targeting hot spots.
The effectiveness of Eastwood Park Dog Control Orders will be reviewed in January 2015.

Sheri Stock
Environmental Protection, Senior Environmental Health Officer,
28th May 2014



Images from the Love Where You Live Dog Campaign 2013.