

1. CONSULTATION ON AMENDMENTS TO DOG CONTROL POLICY

RR 10271

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The purpose of this report is to report back on submissions on proposed amendments to the Council's Dog Control Policy made under the provisions of the Dog Control Act 1996.

INTRODUCTION

The Council, at its meeting on 22 April 1999, adopted a proposed amendment to the Council's Dog Control Policy, as adopted in June 1997, to change the status of the Styx Mill Conservation Reserve from requiring dogs to be on a leash in the area, to prohibiting dogs from the area except for the designated dog park area; to declare as a prohibited dog area the Christchurch Pier and the reserve on the land at the base; and to remove a reference to not charging for dogs released to new owners from the Dog Pound.

Amendments to the policy are required to be undertaken through the special consultative procedure under the Local Government Act 1974 and in such a case registered dog owners must be given specific notice of any draft policy. To enable this to be undertaken at the least cost the opportunity existed for the proposals to be sent to dog owners with the dog registration reminders early in June. Special leaflets were printed and inserted in each registration reminder going out to registered dog owners. In addition advertisements were placed in both the Press and the Christchurch Star and in three suburban newspapers covering the City area. These set out the proposals and advised that submissions would be received until 1 July 1999. Submissions must be considered prior to making a final decision.

Should the policy change be accepted the Christchurch City Dog Control Bylaw 1997 will require to be amended to reflect the policy change relating to prohibited dog areas.

SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED

Seven submissions were received by 1 July. Copies of these are attached and the list below summarises the subject of the submission.

No.	Submitter	Address	Submission
1.	Gypsy-Rose Hardy (dog)	c/o Jan Hardy (email)	Objects to ban in Styx Mill Basin Reserve
2.	Sonya Knapp	30 Lees Road	Supports no charge for release of unclaimed pound dogs
3.	David Moore	35 Mahars Road	Objects to ban on Pier
4.	Mrs N L Stapley	5 Leeman Place	Objects to ban in Styx Mill Basin Reserve
5.	Jeff Mackenzie Rosshire (dog)	29A Taylors Avenue	Objects to ban in Styx Mill Basin Reserve
6.	Bexley Wetland Trust (Mia Colberts, Secretary)	7 Parenga Place	Seeks leash requirement for Bexley Wetland Reserve
7.	Mrs Marianne Potts	329 Pine Avenue	Supports ban on dogs on Pier

Those objecting to a ban on dogs in the Styx Mill Basin Reserve (1, 4 and 5) do so on the grounds that this will further reduce the open areas, and one area in which there are water features and bush, for dogs to go freely in the City. They argue that dogs which behave themselves or are well controlled cause few problems to either the environment or wildlife.

The submissions on the ban on dogs on the Christchurch Pier (3 and 7) express the two points of view for and against. The argument for a ban refers to the evidently already occurring problem of dog faeces on the Pier proper, while that against refers to the opportunity to take their dog onto the Pier with suitable provisions for collecting dog faeces and seem to suggest they would be happy with a leash requirement.

One submission (2) refers to the removal of the policy regarding no charges for the release of dogs from the Pound to new owners and supports its retention. Even if this policy amendment is adopted (the removal of the clause), it would still be up to the Council to set a charge or not for such releases at the time of setting fees each year.

Submission (6) refers to a matter that was not a subject of this consultation. This relates to the Bexley Wetland Reserve and seeks a requirement that dogs be on a lead at all times in the area be introduced. As it was not notified in the consultation process it cannot be considered at this time, but it will be noted for the next time policy changes are considered. This is likely to be in the early part of 2000, in order that the cost of sending the proposal to each registered dog owner can be minimised by advising them individually through the registration reminder process in late May or early June.

CONCLUSIONS

The response to the consultation process was not large but, fortunately, by using the current process of sending out registration reminders for delivering to all registered dog owners, this reduced the cost to the Council.

The proposal to ban dogs from the large part of the Styx Mill Basin Reserve came through the Parks and Recreation Committee with a considered argument. It appears from the consultation process that there is little objection to this proposal which includes the provision of a dog park in the area.

The proposal to ban dogs on the Christchurch Pier and base reserve is supported by the Burwood/Pegasus Community Board and limited submissions were made on this proposal.

Only one submission was made on the removal of the policy relating to the release of dogs from the Dog Pound. It should be noted that it will still be a decision of the Council as to whether to charge or not for the release of dogs to new owners. This will be done annually at the time of setting fees.

Recommendation:

1. That the Christchurch Pier and base reserve, as defined on the map provided, be declared a prohibited dog area under Policy 9 of the Dog Control Policy.

2. That the following policy be deleted:

Where a dog is released to a new owner the new owner is not required to pay the standard release fee but will pay the cost of registration.