

# SOUTH WAIRARAPA DISTRICT COUNCIL

9 AUGUST 2017

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## AGENDA ITEM C5

### DOG CONTROL POLICY AND PRACTICES REPORT FOR 2016/2017

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#### **Purpose of Report**

To enable Council to adopt the report on dog control policy and practices so as to meet the requirements of Section 10A of the Dog Control Act 1996.

#### **Recommendations**

Officers recommend that the Council:

1. *Receives the Dog Control Policy and Practices Report for 2016/2017.*
2. *That pursuant to Section 10A of the Dog Control Act 1996, the attached report (Appendix 1) on Dog Control Policy and Practices for 2016/17 be adopted.*
3. *That officer's be authorised to publicly notify the report and forward it to the Secretary for Local Government.*

#### **1. Background**

Section 10A of the Dog Control Act 1996 requires Council to publicly report, at the end of each financial year, on the implementation of our Dog Control Policy, our dog control practices and relevant statistics on dog control related matters for the district.

The report must be available to the public and notified by public notice.

Council is also required to service a copy of the report to the Secretary for Local Government, Department of Internal Affairs, within one month of adopting the report.

#### **2. Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Dog Control Policy and Practices Report for 2016/17

Contact Officer: Shane Sykes, Environmental Services Team Leader

Approved by: Murray Buchanan, Group Manager, Planning and Environment

# **Appendix 1 - Dog Control Policy and Practices Report for 2016/2017**

## ***INFORMATION AND STATISTICS ON COUNCILS DOG CONTROL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR 1 JULY 2016 TO 30 JUNE 2017.***

### **1. Dog Control in the South Wairarapa**

The district is situated in the southern part of Wairarapa and the south eastern most part of the North Island. It covers an area of 2484 square kilometres.

It is mainly a rural area, although it contains three small towns, Featherston, Martinborough and Greytown.

Council employs two full time Bylaw Officers who are responsible for carrying out day to day dog control activities. These officers provide 24 hour 7 days per-week coverage as required.

During the period covered in this report, both of the experienced Bylaw Officers have taken long-term leave, requiring Council to employ two new staff in these areas.

Council works with local veterinarians, the SPCA and the Police, when carrying out its functions.

Council continues to make significant effort to follow up unregistered dogs and dogs required to be microchipped.

Council is engaging in stronger enforcement action when reasonable to further deter undesirable behavior from dogs and their owners.

### **2. Dog Registration and Other Fees**

The registration fees for dogs were set and publicly notified at the beginning of June 2016 for this financial year.

Base 2016/17 registration fees are \$95.00 (incl GST) for urban dogs and \$64.00 (incl GST) for rural dogs. All fees have a component to cover the National Dog Database costs.

Owners on rural properties pay a flat fee for the first 10 dogs registered and \$20 (incl GST) per dog thereafter on the property.

A reduced fee is available for owners of neutered dogs, as Council considers that this aides our dog control work by improving dog behaviour in relation to roaming and aggression.

#### **2.1 Control of Dogs Policy and Bylaw**

The Policy and Bylaw were adopted by Council on 19 September 2013.

#### **2.2 General**

Dog collars are available for purchase for all dog owners at Council's registration site.

Council purchased a dog barking recording device that has been deployed on private property, with the owner's permission which was useful for capturing evidence of a particular nuisance barking problem.

This was of benefit to Council in investigating this complaint as all site visits previously had found no issues, despite continued complaints from several sources. The use of this device helped resolve a long-standing matter.

It will now be deployed more widely.

### **3. General comments on animal management**

#### **3.1 Training for new staff**

Both of Council's experienced officers have taken long term leave during this reporting period. This has required training of new staff.

Council struggled to find suitably qualified people to fulfil these roles.

This is partly due to the lack of specific educational courses offered in this area.

This is concerning for Council particularly for health and safety reasons as we are not able to find specifically trained staff.

Council would suggest that training courses for animal control officers be developed at a national level to facilitate local government in meeting their requirements.

#### **3.2 Neutering of classified dogs**

Council was granted funding by the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) for neutering of classified dogs.

As part of this process, Council has opted to pay for the microchipping of any dogs participating in this program that were not already microchipped.

#### **3.3 Enforcement**

Council has recently taken a prosecution against a dog owner for an attack on a 12 year old boy. The dog has bitten two people previously, which were not reported to Council at the time of these incidents.

The most recent attack left the boy requiring facial sutures to close the wounds.

Council were perplexed with the outcome of the sentencing after the dog owner pleaded guilty.

Exceptional circumstances were accepted by the presiding Judge due to the dog having a "claimed" eye injury and a destruction order was withheld.

We note this matter so that DIA is aware of the difficulties Councils have in such cases having noted the Ministers specific concern raised in speeches on exactly this type of case.

Central government needs to be working towards stronger deterrence mechanisms for dog attacks with simpler enforcement processes and these need to be backed up by decisions in the Courts.

#### **4. Dogs Prohibited, Leash Only and Dog Exercises Areas**

Council’s Bylaw sets out the areas which are “Dog Prohibited”, “Leash Only” and “Dog Exercise Areas”.

All three townships now have areas set aside to enable owners to exercise and socialise their dogs off lead.

All off leash areas have free bags available for picking up dog faeces with disposal bins provided. Many favourable comments have been made by owners using these areas.

#### **5. Complaints Commentary**

Number of complaints received.

<b>Complaints</b>	<b>Numbers</b>	
	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>2015/16</b>
Barking / Whining	43	41
Aggressive behaviour / Rushing	17	16
Wandering/fouling	138	189
Attack on Person	6	6
Attack on stock	0	5
Attack on Pet	16	10
Welfare concerns	6	11
Found dogs	0	1
Lost dogs	42	57

## 6. Dog Registration, Enforcement and Service Request Statistics for South Wairarapa District Council

Dog Registration, Enforcement and Service Request Statistics	Numbers	
	2016/17	2015/16
Number of dog owners	1753	1672
Number of probationary owners	0	0
Number of disqualified owners	0	0
Number of registered dogs	2974	2905
Number of rural dogs	1866	1898
Number of urban dogs	1108	1007
Number of dogs classified as dangerous under Section 31	1	1
Clause 1(a) due to owner conviction	1	1
Clause 1(b) due to sworn evidence	0	0
Clause 1(c) due to owner admittance	0	0
Number of dogs classified as menacing	23	24
Dogs classified as menacing under Section 33A <i>(Section 33A 1(b) - the territorial authority considers the dog may pose a threat to any person, stock, poultry, domestic animal, or protected wildlife).</i>	12	13
Dogs classified as menacing under Section 33C <i>(Section 33C (1) - the territorial authority has reasonable grounds to believe that the dog belongs wholly or predominantly to one or more breeds or types listed in Schedule 4 of the amendment Act 2004).</i>	11	11
Infringement notices issued	149	154
Failing to register	102	118
Failure to keep dog controlled or confined	7	2
Failure to keep dog under control	1	6
Failure to implant microchip transponder	36	27
Failure to comply with the effect of dangerous classification	0	0
Failure to comply with the effect of menacing classification	2	0
Failure to carry a leash	0	0
Failure to comply with Bylaw	1	1
Failure to undertake owner education programme or dog obedience course (or both)	0	0