

Appendix 7

Feedback to general comments raised during the PSPO public consultation (objections / concerns only)

- Generally opposed to PSPOs (too restrictive, unnecessary / 'anti-dog')

The proposals are intended to provide a balance between allowing dog-owners the opportunity to exercise their dogs in public open spaces and ensuring that others using the same spaces are not adversely affected by dogs that are not under sufficient control. The PSPOs are regularly reviewed in line with legislation.

- Calls for increased enforcement / monitoring / awareness

This feedback is noted. Authorised officers will be refreshed regarding the PSPOs and reminded of the importance of enforcement where it is appropriate to do so. The overall intention remains for dog owners to abide by the requirements of the PSPOs to ensure public spaces can be enjoyed by all.

- Cemeteries and Crematoria - raising concerns / dogs should remain excluded

Specific issues highlighted include the potential for dogs to dig or urinate on graves and dogs barking / causing a disturbance whilst in cemeteries and crematoria. This feedback is noted and these new arrangements will be monitored during the course of the PSPOs being in force, alongside colleagues in Bereavement Services. Furthermore, other PSPOs (e.g. fouling, specified maximum number of dogs) will apply to these spaces. The PSPOs are regularly reviewed in line with legislation and so any issues will be addressed accordingly.

- Dogs on-lead restrictions - should be relaxed in some areas / highlighting the need for dogs to exercise on green spaces

The recommended arrangements are felt to provide ample opportunities for dogs to be exercised in public open spaces (e.g. in general park areas, outside of any specific restrictions). The areas to which this restriction applies are intended to reduce the risk of harm to dogs, motorists, pedestrians and other users of public open spaces.

- Dogs on-lead – further restrictions may be required (e.g. dogs on lead in all public places)

Feedback from some respondents indicated that the areas to which the 'on-lead' PSPO applied could be increased or that dogs could be required to be on-lead in all public places. Under the proposals, dogs must be kept on-lead on all roads, pavements, footpaths, alleyways, cemeteries and crematoria across the city, in addition to specified smaller parks or other specified public spaces. Outside of these areas, dogs can be exercised off-lead (unless dogs are excluded). The City Council recognises that dogs require sufficient exercise, in line with the requirements of the Animal Welfare Act 2006 and it is therefore appropriate that opportunities are available for dogs to be exercised off-lead in some areas. It is felt that the proposed restrictions are appropriate.

- Dog Fouling - could be left to biodegrade in remote / rarely used locations and not picked up.

The City Council would not agree with this suggestion due to the health risks and harm to the amenity dog fouling can cause when not picked up and disposed of appropriately.

- Dog fouling - opposition / concerns re: 'means to pick up' requirement

Whilst these concerns are noted, it is considered reasonable to expect that those in control of a dog within a public space should possess the means to pick up after the dog. This would include situations where the "last bag" has been used, since owners cannot definitively predict the actions / habits of the dog when in a public place and therefore, owners should carry enough bags to cater for all eventualities. Authorised officers will not be empowered to "stop and search" members of the public or require them to "turn out their pockets" but would instead politely ask whether they are able to demonstrate they have appropriate means to pick up, which is felt to be reasonable. In some circumstances, this approach may offer a more proactive and less resource-intensive approach than officers needing to witness a dog foul and the owner fail to pick up.

- Dog exclusion - more exclusion areas needed

Where appropriate, dogs are excluded from children's play areas, sports facilities and other areas across the city. The extent of the exclusions is deemed appropriate and reasonable, taking into account the need for dogs to be exercised.

- Dog exclusion - some exclusion areas are too excessive (e.g. sports pitches, generally)

Where appropriate, dogs are excluded from some pitches across the city only when the pitches are in use. The "when in use" clause would usually apply where

pitches have less frequent formal use and/or where, outside of the pitches, the remaining park area offers only limited opportunities to exercise dogs. In some locations (e.g. bespoke sports facilities or area where there are sufficient opportunities for dogs to be exercised elsewhere in the vicinity / facility), dogs are excluded at all times. Each site has been reviewed alongside colleagues within the relevant teams.

- Dogs maximum number – generally opposed / calls to increase the number of dogs allowed (from 4)

The restriction to the number of dogs under control has been set (at 4) in order to help prevent “pack mentality”, which could affect other dog walkers or users of public spaces. Furthermore, the restriction is aimed to minimise inconvenience / disruption to pedestrians and increase compliance with the other PSPOs relating to dog control in the city and this arrangement has been in place since 2008. It is not the City Council’s intention to revise this requirement.

- Dogs maximum number – calls to decrease the number of dogs allowed (from 4)

For the reasons cited above, it is appropriate to limit the number of dogs to be taken onto a public place however, the City Council recognises that some may choose to own multiple dogs and/or may walk dogs on behalf of others and the arrangement is intended to facilitate this, whilst avoiding inconvenience or disturbance to the general public. Again, this arrangement has been in place since 2008 and it is not the City Council’s intention to revise this requirement.

- Calls for specific or enclosed areas in parks to exercise dogs / more bins in parks / other infrastructure within parks to accommodate dogs

This is not within the scope of the consultation / PSPOs however, this feedback will be shared with the relevant colleagues within the City Council with the responsibility for managing parks / other open spaces.

- Highlighting other issues in parks / open spaces (Antisocial behaviour, littering etc)

The information / feedback provided will be shared with the relevant teams for awareness and, where appropriate, monitoring and enforcement. The scope of this consultation exercise is limited to dog control.

- Call for a dog walking registration scheme, dog licensing or breed specific restrictions

Whilst this feedback is noted, this is not within the scope of this current consultation.

- Concerns authorised officers could be overzealous (e.g. 'on lead by direction' PSPO)

All officers enforcing the PSPOs will be trained prior to authorisation and will be required to adhere to the City Council's Corporate Enforcement Policy. Enforcement of the PSPOs will be monitored throughout and any complaints or concerns addressed accordingly.

- Other / out of scope

Comments out of scope of the current consultation included –

- Where a comment was made but it was too brief or ambiguous to draw any conclusions
- Comments reporting issues in other Local Authority areas
- Issues relating to dogs on private property – for example shops and cafes
- Feedback regarding dogs on public transport
- Issues relating to specific dog attacks or the muzzling of dogs.

Appendix 7

Feedback to site specific comments raised during the PSPO public consultation

- General dog control issues reported in specific parks / locations

Feedback regarding dog control issues in specific parks or other locations will be utilised to inform patrols and / or will be addressed with the relevant teams where appropriate.

- Hough end playing fields – concerns / objections regarding the exclusion requirement

The City Council has carefully considered the points raised in respect of Hough End Playing Fields however, the intention is to continue the current restriction of dogs being excluded from the playing pitches at all times. The City Council's intention in continuing to exclude dogs from the pitches is to minimise the health risks associated with dog fouling being left on the pitches. The Playing Fields provide bespoke sports pitches, with a specific intended use and do not form part of a wider 'park' area. Whilst the main purpose of the playing fields is for the provision of sports pitches, it is recognised that the playing fields are used for other purposes. Approximately 20% of the site remains accessible for dogs, as long as the other applicable PSPOs are adhered to and the dogs are not allowed to roam onto the pitches.

- Chorlton Ees - issues with professional dog walkers (taking more than 4 dogs onto the fields and causing other issues)

Following receipt of this feedback, enforcement patrols will be arranged in the vicinity to help address this issue.

- Chorlton Park - football pitches should be exclusion "when in use", not at all times.

This issue has been carefully considered however, it is the City Council's intention for the dogs to remain excluded from the football pitches at all times. There are 5 football pitches on Chorlton Park, which are well used however, it is considered that the park has sufficient alternative green spaces in which dogs can be exercised without dog walkers needing to access the pitches. Again, the City Council's intention in excluding dogs from the pitches is to minimise the health risks associated with dog fouling being left on the pitches. Chorlton Park

covers an area of approximately 13.06 Hectares, with the football pitches covering an approximate area of 4.57 Hectares.

- Chorlton Park - bowling green is no longer in use and the exclusion should therefore be removed.

It has been confirmed that the bowling green at Chorlton Park is no longer in use and so this location should therefore be removed from the 'exclusion' PSPO. This position may be reviewed should a formal long-term alternative use for the site be identified and implemented.

- Didsbury Park - call for dogs to be on lead in all areas

This was an isolated request but has been given consideration. The restrictions within Didsbury Park have been reviewed and are considered appropriate. On-lead and exclusion areas are in force where appropriate and dogs can be exercised outside of these areas, which is felt to be reasonable.

- Fletcher Moss Gardens - call for dogs to be on lead in all areas

This was an isolated request but has been given consideration. The restrictions within Fletcher moss have been reviewed and are considered appropriate, with the suggested addition of the seating area in the Top Terrace to the on-lead PSPO (as outlined below). On-lead and exclusion areas are in force to protect areas such as the Botanical Gardens and sports facilities, whilst allowing dog owners to exercise their dogs outside of these areas.

- Fletcher Moss Gardens - café area, rose garden and wellbeing gardens should be added to the on-lead PSPO

These suggestions have been reviewed. There are no known issues with dog control in the rose garden and wellbeing gardens and so the current level of restrictions within these areas is considered appropriate. These areas will be monitored and any issues addressed accordingly. The suggested addition of the café area to the on-lead PSPO is considered appropriate in order to reduce the potential disturbance to diners / visitors, whilst still allowing those with dogs to access the area. This is also consistent with the arrangements at some other parks across the city. The Parks Team has confirmed that the appropriate description for the location for the purposes of the PSPO is the "seating area of the Top Terrace".

- Fletcher Moss Gardens- Pergola garden restriction required

There are no known issues with dog control at the Pergola gardens however, this will continue to be monitored. As stated above, the seating area at the Top Terrace is to be added to the areas in which dogs must be kept on-lead.

- Fog Lane Park - query re: location of multi-use games area

The multi-use games area is a fenced off facility and signs are in place to advise that dogs are not permitted. The area is intended to be used solely for sports activities and so it is not appropriate for dogs to enter.

- Merseybank Playing Fields - call for exclusion restriction to be only when in use

The intention remains for dogs to continue to be excluded at all times from the sports pitches at Merseybank Playing Fields and this is not a new or increased requirement. The City Council's intention in continuing to exclude dogs from the pitches is to minimise the health risks associated with dog fouling being left on the pitches. The Playing Fields provide bespoke sports pitches, with a specific intended use and do not form part of a wider 'park' area. Whilst the main purpose of the playing fields is for the provision of sports pitches, it is recognised that the playing fields are used for other purposes. Approximately 30% of the site remains accessible for dogs, as long as the other applicable PSPOs are adhered to and the dogs are not allowed to roam onto the pitches. There have also been recent reports of dog-related antisocial behaviour at this site.

- Marie Louise Gardens – feedback regarding restriction.

2 specific comments were received in respect of this location; one comment was in favour of the restrictions remaining "as is" (general open-space restrictions only) and the other wished for dogs to be on-lead in all areas of the gardens. The current restrictions are deemed appropriate and dogs can be off-lead as long as the other PSPOs in force are adhered to. This is also the view of the relevant 'Friends' group. The location will continue to be reviewed in light of any specific issues raised concerning dog control.

- Alexandra Park – highlighting the need for dogs to be exercised

The arrangements are felt to provide ample opportunity for dogs to be exercised off lead, outside of the specified restricted areas.

- Wythenshawe Park - exclusion too excessive (due to the extent of the cycle areas / tracks)

A number of the revised restrictions / changes to the infrastructure within Wythenshawe Park provide increased opportunities for dogs to be exercised / access green spaces, for example –

- The previous Golf Pitch & Putt has been in part replaced by the new Cycle Hub and associated facilities. The overall restricted area has decreased
- The Athletics track has reduced in size and now incorporates the Pump Track and Learn to Ride area. The approximate size of the restricted area has therefore reduced from 9.5 acres to 6 acres, meaning more areas are accessible to those with dogs.

Wythenshawe Park covers an area of approximately 269 acres and so it is considered that the current level of restrictions offers sufficient opportunities for dogs to be walked / exercised.

- Wythenshawe Park - football pitch should be exclusion only when in use

As a major park within the city, there is considerable space for dogs to be exercised off-lead without needing to utilise the football pitches for these purposes. As stated above, the park covers an area of approximately 269 acres and the pitches cover an area of approximately 8.8 acres. The exercising of dogs on the pitches, fouling and dogs digging can affect the fine turf areas, resulting in maintenance issues, affecting the quality of the surface and causing associated safety concerns of faeces that has been missed/ not collected.