

Please note Council has not changed, nor corrected these questions and comments from the dogs webinar on June 21 2022. They appear as they were written by participants. Personal details have been removed. These are initial staff comments only and not indicative of any decisions that may be made. Thank you to all those who contributed and shared their views.

1. How many dog control officers are there?

Two full time in Te Awamutu, and 1.6 in Cambridge. We do have an additional two warranted officers available to cover/assist if required. Contractors provide an after-hours service.

2. We also run dogs on the off-lead area at Maclean St and its great. Would love something similar in Kihikihi/Te Awamutu. Maybe there is somewhere fenced but I haven't found it yet!

Ash Grove Reserve off Chatsfield Drive is a large area, mostly fenced or contained.

3. Im struggling with people constantly not keeping their dogs in their property. Goodfellow street, station road and Laurie street area in Te Awamutu are shocking! Makes it quite scary walking your onleash dog in town and why I always use these exercise areas instead which is very helpful.

Have noted your comments. Please don't hesitate to report specific events to Council's animal control team when they occur. Please provide as much detail as you can in terms of date, time, place and dog description etc.

4. I would like the Council to consider making all "off leash" dog exercise areas completely fenced (farm style wire fencing and gated) like the Lamb Street fields are - this would ensure total dog safety

While this would be ideal solution for many dog owners, cost is a factor given the number of existing offleash areas available and their size and shape. We agree that the Wordsworth Street park is a great asset for local dog owners, and it would be good to have more fencing in time ,as funds allow. We are also mindful that owners need to ensure dogs are under control regardless of whether there is fencing.

5. There is conflicting signage in McKinnon park which causes confusion as to where your dog can be on or off lead. One end under the trees says off lead where as the other end by Grosvenor st says on lead. Also there is the agility grounds there which are off-lead. So maybe clearer consistent signage is needed?

Thanks for bringing this to our attention, our team will check it out straight away.

6. If a dog has been deemed a nuisance or dangerous, can this be reviewed if the person/dog has subsequently gone through a behavioural modification program successfully.

For **dogs** classified as menacing or dangerous, it is our understanding that there is no opportunity for this to be reviewed under the legislation, apart from an initial appeal period (14 days). We are aware however that some other Councils are exploring this as an option, and we will be keenly following the results of this. **Persons** who are disqualified from dog ownership, or who are classified as probationary owners could potentially have their classifications reviewed following a suitable training programme (as they have the ability to object at any time during the disqualification period, subject to some legal criteria).

7. Hi, Thanks for holding this. You have mentioned conflicting views - these can easily be addressed by time-zoning dog on/off leash areas. For example, a couple of hours in the morning/afternoon to let those of us who like to have our dogs off leash at the lake still have the opportunity to do so. Current flat, boring dog parks (that don't have their agility areas maintained sufficiently) are not much fun for either the dog or owner to walk around. Thanks. Thanks for your feedback, we will consider this suggestion.
8. McKinnon Park needs to be safely fenced and gated if it is an off lead exercise area. The costs are not huge for this especially if the Council ask the community to be involved. Many people are happy to assist with the construction and donate materials

See fencing comments above.

9. Can we open up the now closed Leamington Motorcross Bike track as it is reserve and no longer used off lead

This is currently still leased but is an option we can look at.

10. Why have you listed Te Awamutu's War Memorial Park as Off-leash? This is not accurate. Thank you

The rear of Memorial Park, through to Racecourse Road, is currently designated off-leash.

11. I believe dog access rules are being broken in the area due to not enough places being available. Taking more places away only increases this. This whole process has only highlighted to me, the lack of suitable areas actually available to me, this would be hugely exacerbated if lost this off leash access. I lived in Auckland 10 years ago, and had more off leash access in the middle of a city! This needs addressing in our area. (Even out of town there aren't longer walks to go to).

It's also highlighted to me, that without me being notified, I've been changed from a rural zoning to an urban zoning. My registration fees have gone up, yet I have no dog park without a 10 minute drive to get there. Another example of changes without clear communication and adequate spaces. I'm "urban" - but I have to drive to find a place to exercise my dog legally!

General comments noted, thanks. The criteria for determining "rural" vs "urban" areas for dog owners is something that can potentially be included in the new dog policy\once it is formally reviewed. We encourage you to provide any ideas you have around this.

12. With Kihikihi domain if you are going to exclude dogs from the fields, how about horses they make more of mess than any dogs does

Only the rugby playing fields have been suggested as being prohibited to dogs, the remainder of the grounds will likely remain as an off leash dog exercise area.

13. No mention of the sports grounds in Ohaupo?

There is a suggestion to relocate the existing off-leash area (which is a sports field) to an adjacent area of reserve that is yet to be developed. While not mentioned specifically it is still a proposal.

14. Suggest one big issue is the suggestion that dogs are either on or off lead. Perhaps including the idea of "under-control" would be more appropriate as there are so many well-behaved dogs and owners that can be off-lead and maintained well under control.

Noted, thank you.

15. Can we advise via the Antenno app of dogs not being on lead when they should be?

Antenno is a useful tool for general reporting of issues, however be aware that it won't be received by staff until the next business day i.e. if received on a weekend it will get logged by customer support staff during Monday and then referred to animal control staff. So Antenno should never be used to report urgent issues.

16. Are council reviewing any other policies and bylaws other than exercise areas? What other main things are likely to be reviewed?

The entire policy and bylaw documents are being reviewed. Other items to be considered will depend on feedback, but could potentially include things like our dog registration urban vs rural criteria, requiring nuisance dogs to be desexed, policy around classifying pitbulls, determining time frames for disqualification of dog ownership etc. See existing policy and bylaw documents here:

<https://www.waipadc.govt.nz/repository/libraries/id:26zgz4o7s1cxbyk7hfo7/hierarchy/our-services/animal-control/dogs/dog-registration/documents/Dog%20Control%20Bylaw%202015.pdf>

<https://www.waipadc.govt.nz/repository/libraries/id:26zgz4o7s1cxbyk7hfo7/hierarchy/our-services/animal-control/dogs/by-laws-policies-and-legal-obligations-of-dog-owners/documents/Dog%20Control%20Policy%202015.pdf>

17. REGARDING THE UNRESTRAINED DOGS IN PRIVATE PROPERTY: they often run out to your dog when walking past which is quite scary as they are often aggressive and protecting their house but if they were behind a fence then they wouldn't be an issue.

We can't enforce fenced properties where dogs reside, as there is no legal requirement to do so. However we currently offer discounts to urban owners with fenced properties as a reward for responsibly containing their dog(s). We can investigate reports of aggression, so if you have issues with any dog running out to you, please don't hesitate to report to Council's animal control team for follow up.

18. Also would you consider a rebate for dog registration for dogs who attend day-cares or something similar as they are in a safe area that keeps them out of trouble

Considering a fee structure for dog registration is something that could potentially be included in the policy (it isn't at the current time – fees and charges are a separate annual process). Regular and permanent day-care attendance may be difficult for Council staff to verify though.

19. What are your thoughts on designating some dog off lead areas for large dogs and other smaller off lead areas for small dogs?

Controls based on size, breed or age etc can be hard to administer but certainly an option we can explore further. Note comment 20.

20. Thank you for organising this and being so open to feedback. Fenced dog exercise areas are definitely a double edged sword. Great for some dogs, but in many cases they end up being a crutch for untrained dogs so you get dogs being let off lead without suitable control which creates issues unless really well enforced. Some of this could be mitigated through having multiple different areas though - The Groynes in Christchurch is a really good example of what can be done to cater to a wide range of needs including more natural areas while keeping conflicts to a minimum.

Thanks for your comments, which have been noted. And we will check out that Christchurch area ...

21. Time zoning is confusing for everyone especially for people that don't own dogs and like to abuse dog owners for having their dog somewhere when they think you shouldn't be there (but are in the time zone). Have had first hand experience of this in Auckland (unfortunately)

Comments noted, thanks.

22. The Leamington Rugby Sports club have agreed with council to have a fully fenced dog exercise area. My position as chairman I have asked people with dogs to adhere to the posted signage. Generally I am told to mind my business or there are dogs in the area worrying their dogs. The pedestrian gates that are in place could be removed to encourage people to use the wordsworth street site only. Your map shows the area of the cricket field and the 3rd rugby field as part of your dog excersie srea.

The maps were created when this area was included as a dog exercise area, but they will be updated at the completion of this review to reflect all changes. Comments about the gate will be referred to our parks team for consideration.

23. That would be awesome to work closely with doc as that would might be giving us more awesome walks in the bush. good owners know how to pick up poo etc

Watch this space. If we hear more about DOC plans we will notify our community.

24. Please!!! can we start having dog control, registration notices etc sent by email?

This is something we have been keen to do for some time but we have been hindered by our software capabilities. However over the last year we have found a possible solution, and we really hope to have this in place for next year's registration process.

25. Can you clarify which part of Te Koutu Lake is on lease and where is off leash please?

Under our current bylaw, all of the lower area is off leash. The upper area is on leash, with the exception of the playground area which is prohibited to dogs.

26. an other one for the environment would be great to have dog tags in metal and not plastic. tag will stay on dog till the end of live.

We have recently been sent information about a permanent tag option, and we will be looking into this.

27. Can you tell me if the off lead exercise area off Shelly Street in Leamington is fully fenced? it backs onto many houses in Cambridge Park and there is a gully that extends past a stormwater catchment all the way to the main road I think.

A large part of this reserve is fenced, but it is not fully fenced.

Common Themes

Questions around Cultural Significance

28. One of the issues was having dogs (on lead) being culturally inappropriate in areas....can you talk on this please.

Local Iwi have suggested we consider change to Kakepuku Maunga, and their explanation for this is likely to be provided in a formal submission later in the year.

- 29. What other bush walks can we use if Kakepuku is taken away? I dont understand the cultural aspects when Ngaroto is also a Pa sight?**

More information will be provided as stakeholders provide their feedback.

- 30. The cultural sensitivities being the reason for putting dogs on lead at Kakepuku - what is the difference between other animals roaming off lead there, and how is a dog on lead sensitive but a dog off lead, not culturally sensitive?**

Dogs should not be roaming in this (or any public) area. If you see a roaming dog, please don't hesitate to report to our animal control team.

Questions around Communications

- 31. While I appreciate there has been a communication error, and this is being addressed, I still feel that without the social media backlash about the request for submissions, there might have been a risk of some of these possible changes being pushed through differently. The council had the perfect medium to communicate with dog owners - annual registration letters. ALL dog owners need to be informed of this, not those just on social media. Communication going forward needs to be much more inclusive and time given to people to respond.**

Council's "Canine Comment" newsletter was sent to every registered dog owner in the district with registration notices this year (copy on our web page). There was information in the newsletter relating to the upcoming policy review, but at that time we weren't able to confirm dates when it would be taking place.

We are only in the very early stages of asking for general feedback from the public. Once we have compiled draft documents with suggested changes, notice of this will be posted to every registered dog owner in the district inviting them to make a formal submission. This is likely to be in (or around) February 2023.

- 32. Did anyone else have an issue with accessing the submissions link provided by council? I have many emails returning to me being unable to be delivered. Please ensure any future submission links actually work so you can get ALL feedback being submitted.**

We apologise for early hiccups. Your comments have been noted, thank you.

- 33. Will comments sent along with the application to join this meeting be considered? or need to be re-submitted?**

All comments received will help staff to form the draft policy and bylaw documents. When our formal consultation process takes place, you are encouraged to read these draft documents, and make a further formal submission which will be considered by Council. You are welcome to resubmit your earlier comments as part of the formal process, if they are still relevant at that time.

- 34. Will the submissions that were requested by email still be used? Would be good for these to be included with material. (This was previously on your website before the webinar was announced)**

See response to above question

- 35. No nothing in our dog registration either that alerted me to any of this. Going forward, whatever process occurs, can all dog owners please have a chance to have a say. Some aren't connected via social media etc. Thanks.**

A newsletter was sent to every dog owner in the district with the dog registration notice and this advised that the policy and bylaw would be reviewed this year (copy on our website). The Dog Control Act requires every dog owner in the district to receive notice of the draft policy, so every registered dog owner will have the opportunity to make a formal submission when the time comes (looking to be February 2023, but this is subject to change). In the meantime though, your comments are definitely noted thank you, and we will take every opportunity to connect with all persons by various means.

Questions/comments around monitoring and enforcement of parks:

- 36. This is Cambridge, I encounter so many dog walkers in on leash areas, sports grounds and your main streets with their dogs OFF leads. They DON'T care and you just get abuse when you ask them to put their dog on a lead - you see their dogs also go toilet everywhere as they are halfway down the street and the owners do not even see them. WE call the council and your council do NOT do anything! WHAT are you as a COUNCIL are going to do about it! Just talking about it is not an action!**

See response to no 40 below.

- 37. When does enforcement kick in? This has been going on for years and years**

See comments for number 40 below.

- 38. The sports grounds are poorly managed I play sports and regularly have to ask people get their dogs off the field and put them on leads**

See comments for number 40 below, but if you have any specific information about the dogs or owners that will allow us to follow up these incidents, please don't hesitate to contact Council's animal control team.

- 39. What about shift styled hours for the dog control officers so they are out in the evenings and weekends?**

We currently have an after-hours service for urgent and public safety issues, however it could potentially be reviewed to include monitoring. Additionally, some shift work in the summer months for day staff is something that could be investigated. Thanks for your suggestion.

- 40. Many dogs are off lease in a 'lease only' park (namely Taylor Street, adjacent to Stafford Street). This is despite much signage at every entrance stating that dogs must be on leads - dog owners continually ignore. Many dogs also seen off lease walking public streets, often with owners far ahead / behind with no interest in controlling their dog, or cleaning up its mess. I sometimes politely remind the dog owners that their dog should be on a lead but, most times, I am either ignored or aggressively told to mind my own business. Despite much reporting to Waipa Council (in particular, the Dog Control Team) nothing has improved. I see very little by way of council presence let alone enforcement (such as the issuing of infringement notices to offenders). It's all very well reviewing policy but council need to enforce. Any policy review must include consideration on appropriate and well-resourced regular enforcement to ensure compliance. Can this please be considered?**

Thanks for your comments. Guidelines on how we enforce the bylaw is something that can be included in the policy document. And following recent discussions with our team there is likely to be some reference to this in the draft document that will be available for public submission. In the meantime this particular area is regularly monitored by staff following complaints.

We see this review as an opportunity to communicate the changes to public areas, potentially then leading into a stronger enforcement regime, depending on the outcome of the review.

A/H seems to be the biggest issue. We will consider the best way to better monitor after hours activities by dog owners.

- 41. It goes to show that rules aren't effective then, so imposing more restrictions will only affect good people that follow the rules affecting them even further. Better compliance would be more effective than further rules...**

Comments noted, thanks.

- 42. I have been dogs lately at the leashed area on Robinson/Watkins Rd and have the same issue. Not sure how this can be enforced?**

This area is monitored by animal control staff, however the timing of this doesn't always coincide with when offences are taking place.

- 43. One even worse people running their dogs in the country on narrows roads while they are still driving in their cars and the council have said I need to take photos to prove this and who is doing this**

We can't take enforcement action unless we know who the offending dog owner is (and we have done so for similar offences). We do have a suggestion from staff to include this as a specific offence in our revised bylaw in any area, including designated off-leash areas.

Comments around facilities

- 44. Meant to add that providing poo bags is a good idea. In Taupo DC areas they are provided and it does help with compliance - though for sure there are still people who don't comply.**

We currently provide bags at two parks in Cambridge, and at the domain in Kihikihi. We are considering whether these can be extended to other parks also (over time).

Comments around providing for large dogs/larger/longer exercise areas requirement:

- 45. There are not a lot of areas, and few are large**

Noted, thanks. If you have suggestions for new suitable areas, please let us know.

- 46. Some larger dogs need larger areas where they can be fully exercised, there is already very very limited areas where dogs can be taken for a decent walk (even on leash). More options for decent walks would be wonderful.**

Noted thanks. If you have suggestions for a suitable walking route, please let us know.

- 47. My dogs need a LOT of exercise. Playing in a dog park doesn't cut it. I'd love walks or areas to walk off lead where it takes me an hour or more to walk a circuit. I'm currently in Hawke's Bay and there are a number of really good areas to walk dogs off lead - for a couple of hours if I want (and no, I don't mean on the sea front).**

Noted thanks. If you have suggestions for suitable areas we can consider, please let us know.

- 48. Just wanted to awhi the need for places where we can take our dogs for longer walks. Because of DOC protections there aren't many options around Te Awamutu. Having lived in Rotorua and Taupo I really miss the variety of hour-long bush walks that were readily available.**

Establishing a "walking route" is something we have considered, however it would be likely to have areas of on leash and off leash. If you have suggestions for a suitable route, we would love to hear about it.

49. Alongside the need for larger areas with longer off leash walks, Lake TeKoutu in particular is the only area that caters for our young family with pram friendly access where we can take our whole family to co-exist and walk. The other dog paddocks are not young child friendly - nor do they have suitable pram access. This is also applicable for runners who use it to run alongside their off leash dogs. It's the best off leash dog access in our town and would be a huge loss if removed.

Comments noted, thank you.

50. If these possible changes (as mentioned in the webinar) are implemented, it has a huge run on effect. Large dogs particularly need larger off-leash areas to adequately exercise and at present, in my opinion there just isn't a good amount of suitable places for this to happen. Assigning a back paddock on the outskirts of town doesn't cater for this. We will begin to see more issues with dog behaviour if this isn't well catered for or reduced. On leash access does not exercise dogs adequately.

Comments noted, thank you.

51. I agree with ... that larger areas where longer walking opportunities are needed. There are plenty of places in the district that people can go without being exposed to dogs (eg All of Pirnogia FP). It is no problem to stop at the DOC boundary. Likewise the dogs being on lead is no problem (to me anyway). Ngaroto is ok, but very crowded and I can see that it won't be long before walkers and riders complain about dogs - and I can understand that owners who don't comply with the requirement to pick up poop are problematic.

Comments noted, thank you.