



**REPORT of
DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**to
COUNCIL
10 JULY 2025**

PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDER CONSULTATION EVALUATION

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Members approval to renew the current Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) relating to powers for managing dog control in specified places within the district. This order will be valid for three years from 18 July 2025.
- 1.2 The proposed PSPO is set out at **APPENDIX 1** has been informed by a comprehensive public consultation. The proposals include additional restrictions supported by the public relating to
- (i) Dog Exclusion areas,
 - (ii) the period during which Dogs must be kept on a lead, and
 - (iii) additional areas where dogs are required to be kept on leads.
- 1.3 Full details of the proposed conditions are set out at paragraphs Section 6 below.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- (i) That Members note the outcome of the public consultation as set out at **APPENDIX 3**;
- (ii) that the Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) be renewed for three years from 18 July 2025;
- (iii) that the amended conditions as set out in paragraphs 6.2.1 – 6.2.4 below, be agreed;
- (iv) that the new conditions as set out at paragraphs 6.3.1 – 6.3.2 below, be agreed.

3. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 As a Local Authority we want to continue to promote responsible dog ownership and to ensure that our public spaces can be used and enjoyed by all members of the community.
- 3.2 The Council has powers granted under the Anti-Social Behaviour and Policing Act 2014 (the Act) to implement measures to manage dog control across its public spaces. PSPOs made under this Act support clear communication to the public of the

location and type of dog control measures and gives Authorised Officers the tools and powers to engage, educate and where necessary enforce the conditions of the PSPO.

- 3.3 On 18 July 2022 the Council agreed to implement a PSPO to manage dog control measures across the District a number of public spaces. This order must be reviewed after three years, and on 3 April 2025 the Council approved a public consultation to inform if the dog control measures should continue beyond 18 July 2025.
- 3.4 The PSPO allows for authorised Officers to enforce the dog controls contained within the order including the ability to issue Fixed Penalty Notices to those failing to comply as follows:
- Dog Fouling - not 'picking up' after their dogs.
 - Putting dogs on a lead – not following a request by Officers be placed on a lead when necessary to prevent a nuisance.
 - Dogs in areas where not permitted – dogs in specific excluded areas such as play sites and sports pitches.
 - Dogs off lead – where dogs are off lead in designated areas where they required to be on a lead at all times.
- 3.5 PSPOs can be enforced by Police Officers, authorised PCSOs, designated Council Officers including officers who have been accredited by Essex Police under the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme.

4. THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

- 4.1 Following the Council's approval to proceed with a public consultation this was launched on 10 April 2025 and ran for six weeks to 22 May 2025. The consultation had regard to the public's right of freedom of expression and the rights of assembly and sought views on renewing the current PSPO and potentially expanding the existing controls,
- 4.2 In addition to the full public consultation the Chief Officer of Police, the Police and Crime Commissioner and those potentially affected by the proposed PSPO were contacted directly, with details of how they could engage with the consultation and submit their feedback.
- 4.3 There was significant public engagement with the consultation, and 1,279 responses being received, containing over 4,000 comments. 92% of the respondents were residents.
- 4.4 Of the total respondents, approximately two thirds were dog owners, and one third were not.

5. THE CONSULTATION RESULTS

- 5.1 Following the conclusion of the consultation the responses have been analysed and are summarised in **APPENDIX 3**.
- 5.2 It is clear that there is strong public support for renewing the existing PSPO, and whilst the levels of support differ between the dog owners and non-dog owners, there is nonetheless a good level of support for all of the proposals.

- 5.3 The strongest support from both owners and non-dog owners relates to the issuing of fines for dog fouling with more than 98% of each group agreeing.
- 5.4 The proposals to extend the six-month dogs on lead condition to 12 months was still supported, but with more non dogwalkers supporting this than dog owners.
- 5.5 The clear public support for the proposals, and the measures proposed to enable Officers to enforce the PSPO supports the renewal of the PSPO for three years with:
- existing restrictions as set out at section 6.1,
 - proposals to amend existing restrictions set the out at section 6.2;
 - New restrictions as set out at section 6.3.

6. PROPOSED CONDITIONS OF PSPO

6.1 SUMMARY OF NO-CHANGE PROPOSALS

Dog Control Type	Existing / New	Changes Proposed	Proposals	Public feedback
Dog Fouling	Existing	No Change Proposed	That authorised Officers continue to be given the power to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) to a person who is in charge of the dog at the time fails to remove its faeces from the land forthwith. The Order shall apply to all land within the administrative area of the Council which is open to the air to which the public are entitled or permitted to have access with or without payment.	Overall 98.75% of respondents agree with this proposal
Dogs On Leads By Direction	Existing	No Change proposed	That authorised Officers continue to be given the power to request that owners place their dogs on a lead if their behaviour is having or is likely to have a detrimental effect on the local community.	Overall 83.42% of respondents agree with this proposal
Dog Exclusion Areas - Child Play sites	Existing	No Change Proposed	To continue to include all children's play sites as dog exclusion areas with the Public Space Protection Order. Children's play sites are required to be safe and clean areas for children to use freely. As a result, all Maldon District Council managed play sites have been identified as dog free zones.	Overall 77.95% of respondents agree with this proposal
Dog Exclusion Areas - Enclosed Sports Pitches	Existing	No Change Proposed	To continue to include all enclosed sports pitches as dog free zone	Overall 72.87% of respondents agree with this proposal
Dogs On Leads at all times Cemeteries	Existing	No Change Proposed	That dogs will continue to be required to be on a lead at all times within the Cemeteries in Heybridge, Burnham-on-Crouch and Maldon	Overall 90.93% of respondents agree with this proposal

6.2 SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS TO CHANGE EXISTING CONTROLS

6.2.1 Promenade Park Lake area

Dog Control Type	Existing / New	Changes Proposed	Proposals	Public feedback
Dogs on Leads – Promenade Park Lake area	Existing	Yes	Change Proposed- current six-month seasonal conditions to be extended to apply all year round	Overall, 57.08% of respondents agree with this proposal

Breakdown of response (Promenade Park Lake Area)

	Disagree with Dogs on Lead April to Sept.	Agree with Dogs on Lead April - Sept.	Agree with Dogs on Lead all year	Don't Know
Dog Owners	19.08%	32.83%	46.24%	1.85%
Non-Dog Owners	5.07%	14.25%	79.71%	0.97%

6.2.2 Promenade Park Extension to Byrhtnoth Statue

Dog Control Type	Existing/ New	Changes Proposed	Proposals	Public feedback
Dogs on Leads – Promenade Park Extension to Byrhtnoth Statue	Existing	Yes	Change Proposed- current six-month seasonal conditions to be extended to apply all year round	Overall, 55.51% of respondents agree with this proposal

Breakdown of response (Promenade Park Extension to Byrhtnoth Statue)

	Disagree with Dogs on Lead April to Sept.	Agree with Dogs on Lead April - Sept.	Agree with Dogs on Lead all year	Don't Know
Dog Owners	24.62%	28.09%	44.28%	3.01%
Non-Dog Owners	5.56%	14.01%	78.99%	1.45%

6.2.3 Burnham- on-Crouch -Riverside Park and Quay Front

Dog Control Type	Existing/ New	Changes Proposed	Proposals	Public feedback
Dogs on Leads – Riverside Park and Quay Front	Existing	Yes	Change Proposed- current six-month seasonal conditions to be extended to apply all year round- APPENDIX 2 (Map 2 area A)	Overall 52.33% of respondents agree with this proposal

Breakdown of response

	Disagree with Dogs on Lead April to Sept.	Agree with Dogs on Lead April - Sept.	Agree with Dogs on Lead all year	Don't Know
Dog Owners	25.29%	23.77%	40.28%	10.66%
Non-Dog Owners	4.62%	12.41%	77.37%	5.6%

6.2.4 Burnham-on-Crouch - Quay Front

Dog Control Type	Existing/ New	Changes Proposed	Proposals	Public feedback
Dogs on Leads – Burnham-on-Crouch Quay Front	Existing	Yes	Change Proposed- current 6 month seasonal conditions to be extended to apply all year round - APPENDIX 2 (Map 2 area B)	Overall, 53.8% of respondents agree with this proposal

Breakdown of response

	Disagree with Dogs on Lead April to Sept.	Agree with Dogs on Lead April - Sept.	Agree with Dogs on Lead all year	Don't Know
Dog Owners	22.51%	25.32%	42.32%	9.85%
Non Dog Owners	5.11%	12.65%	77.62%	4.62%

6.3 SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS FOR NEW CONTROLS

6.3.1 Promenade Park- Open Sports Fields

Dog Control Type	Existing / New	Proposals	Public feedback
Dogs on Leads Promenade Park- Specified Open Sports Fields	New	That a new condition is introduced for dogs to be on leads APPENDIX 2 (Map 1 area C)	Overall, 64.11% of respondents agree with this proposal

Breakdown of response

	Disagree	Agree	Don't Know
Dog Owners	40.35%	53.53%	6.13%
Non-Dog Owners	8.94%	86.23%	4.83%

6.3.2 Riverside Park specified Open Sports field

Dog Control Type	Existing / New	Proposals	Public feedback
Dogs on Leads Riverside Park - Specified Open Sports Fields	New	That a new condition is introduced for dogs to be on leads APPENDIX 2 (Map 2 area C)	Overall, 62.86% of respondents agree with this proposal

Breakdown of response

	Disagree	Agree	Don't Know
Dog Owners	34.1%	52.72%	13.18%
Non Dog Owners	7.97%	84.06%	7.97%

7. COMMENTS FROM CONSULTATION

7.1 In total more than 4,000 comments were made through the consultation. These comments have been reviewed and key themes from the comments have been summarised below:

7.2 Dog Fouling

- Concern about impact of dog fouling, particularly health risks
- Strong support for enforcement of Dog Fouling
- More staff to issue fines
- Larger fines
- Need for more bins to dispose of dog waste

7.3 Dogs on Lead when requested

- Strong support
- Would be dependent on circumstances
- Requires resources and visibility of officers to enforce.
- Requires clarity on what type of lead (does it include extendable)
- Wouldn't solve dog fouling issue
- Should still have areas could be off lead

7.4 Dog Exclusion Children's Play Areas

- Strongly supported
- Those that did not support suggested dogs on leads as alternative
- Important for child safety and hygiene
- Should not apply to assistance dogs

7.5 Dog Exclusion – Enclosed Sports Pitches

- Well supported
- Concern about impact of dog fouling, particularly health risks
- Ok as long as dog excrement picked up
- Families like to take their dogs to matches
- Should be OK if dogs on lead
- Players step in/ slip in dog excrement
- Comments from clubs they have to clear pitches of dog excrement

7.6 Dogs on Lead – Cemeteries

- Very strongly supported
- Respectful
- Concerns about dog fouling

7.7 General themes

- Consider designated / enclosed areas for dogs being able to be off lead
- More patrols and Fines/ Visible Enforcement of PSPO
- Dogs should be kept on lead and under control
- More dog bins
- Increased signage
- Open spaces to allow dogs to run free are vital
- Dogs should be trained- responsibility should sit with owner
- A few bad dog owners are ruining it for the majority of responsible owners
- Provide free dog waste bags
- Encourage positive behaviour and consider other ways of doing this – not just enforcement

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The public consultation has had an excellent level of response and has clear support for the renewal of the PSPO, the extension of the conditions within the PSPO and new conditions for designated open sports pitches.
- 8.2 The renewal of the PSPO will provide a vital tool to enable the Council to manage and enforce Dog control in many of its parks and open spaces, to actively encourage and promote positive behaviour by dog owner, and to deter poor behaviour through the use of enforcement and issuing of fines.
- 8.3 The public feedback will help to inform how the PSPO is implemented, including suggestions related to improved signage, dog bins and availability of dog waste bags.
- 8.4 Members recent decision to increase the Community Engagement team resources will help to ensure that the PSPO can be implemented and enforced appropriately across all areas.

9. IMPACT ON PRIORITIES AS SET OUT IN THE CORPORATE PLAN 2025 – 2028

9.1 Supporting our communities

- 9.1.1 Our residents have clearly indicated the importance of dog control, particularly in public spaces, and renewing the PSPO will provide Officers with powers to encourage positive dog control and deter poor dog control through engagement and enforcement where necessary.

9.2 Investing in our District

- 9.2.1 Renewal of the PSPO will be an investment in keeping our public spaces safe, for both non dog owners, and dog owners alike.

9.3 **Protecting our environment**

- 9.3.1 Enforcement of dog control, particularly dog fouling helps to protect the public and environment. Dog fouling in particular poses risks to the public's health.

9.4 **Delivering good quality services.**

- 9.4.1 The PSPO will help us to main the high quality of our parks and public spaces, enabling all residents and visitors to enjoy the beautiful surroundings in a safe way.

10. **IMPLICATIONS**

- (i) **Impact on Customers** – The PSPO will help to ensure all our residents and visitors can enjoy our parks and public spaces.
- (ii) **Impact on Equalities** – The PSPO will ensure that the community can all enjoy the facilities of our parks and public spaces.
- (iii) **Impact on Risk (including Fraud implications)** – The PSPO will help to reduce the risk of poor dog control through both promotion of the controls and encouraging good behaviours, together with clear enforcement.
- (iv) **Impact on Resources (financial)** – There will be some costs, however we are seeking external funding to support, for example more dog waste bins, signage and dog waste bags.
- (v) **Impact on Resources (human)** – Members have recently agreed additional resource within the Community Engagement Team, to support the implementation of the PSPO and enforcement.
- (vi) **Impact on Devolution / Local Government Reorganisation** – None.

Background Papers:

APPENDIX 1 – Proposed Public Space Protection Order

APPENDIX 2 – Maps related to Public Space Protection Order

APPENDIX 3 - Consultation responses

Enquiries to:

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