

MEETING	Communities Scrutiny Committee
DATE	12 September, 2024
TITLE	Public Spaces Protection Order (Dog Control)
REASON FOR SCRUTINY	Operational assurance of the Public Spaces Protection Order (Dog Control)
AUTHOR	Peter Simpson, Streetscene Service Manager
AELOD CABINET	Coun. Berwyn Parry Jones

1. Why does it need to be scrutinized?

The Council implements a Public Spaces Protection Order (Dog Control) as a lack of dog control by owners has a negative impact on our communities with the cumulative effect of not clearing or picking up dog waste adversely affecting the image of communities and can pose a risk to human health.

Dog control orders have been in place since 2013 and have now been extended to August 14, 2027.

The powers of the order relate to the matters below:

- not clearing or picking up dog waste
- allowing a dog enter land where dogs are excluded
- not putting and keeping a dog on a lead when a person is asked to do so by an authorised officer.

Non-compliance with the order can result in a fixed penalty notice of £100 (reduced to £75, if paid within 10 working days) or prosecution with a maximum penalty of £1,000.00.

2. What exactly needs to be scrutinised?

- How the orders are implemented together and an update of the process to extend the order
- How many fines have been issued to owners
- What campaigns are being undertaken to highlight the responsibilities of dog owners.

3. Summary and Key Issues

- Seeking the opinion of the Scrutiny Committee whether any future changes to the order will need to be consulted on.

4. Background / Context

4.1. How the orders are operated together and an update of the process to extend the order.

The Public Spaces Protection Order (Dog Control) is operated by the Streetscene Enforcement Team. This includes implementing relevant legislation and guidance, responding to complaints, patrolling, issuing fixed penalties, raising awareness and other prevention activity, such as signage. Powers to issue fixed penalties for Dog Control offences on beaches have also been delegated to officers from the Council's Maritime Service.

In addition to dog control orders, the Streetscene Enforcement Team is also responsible for numerous other enforcement duties, including litter and waste, fly-tipping, graffiti and fly-posters. The Team is led by a Senior Officer who manages 4 Warden/Officers, who operate throughout Gwynedd. They form part of the larger Streetscene Service and work in very close partnership with the Street Cleansing and Tîm Tacluso Ardal Ni (Tidy Teams) Services.

The proposed extension of Gwynedd Council's of Public Spaces Protection Order (Dog Control) 2021 was approved without change for a period of three years to 14 August 2027. A public consultation was required in preparing an extension to the current order and a summary of the results of the public consultation can be found in Appendix 2 (AT2).

4.2. How many warnings/fines have been issued to owners

The number of fixed penalties issued for Dog Control offences is currently on the increase. The majority of these relate to dog fouling offences and breaches of exclusion zones. It should be noted that the majority of dog owners are very careful and receptive to awareness raising initiatives. The issue of a fixed penalty or a prosecution are therefore seen as a last resort, which target the minority who fail to comply.

The table below shows the number of fines that have been issued by the officers for the year 2023/24 and the current year.

Year	Dog Fouling	Exclusions	Dogs on Lead	Total
2023 - 24	21	8	0	29
2024 - (first 5 months)	8	8	0	16

4.3. What campaigns are being undertaken to highlight the responsibilities of dog owners.

A very important element of this work includes educative and awareness campaigns among dog owners. These include:

- Regulatory signs giving direction, e.g. "Clean it up", "No Dogs", "Keep to the Path" and all signage designating seasonal exclusion zones on beaches.
- A range of awareness raising signs, including ones designed by young people, the "Bag it and Bin it" signs, "Leave Only Pawprints" signs, etc.
- The Team has run a number of campaigns locally (e.g. Dyffryn Nantlle, Blaenau Ffestiniog), Countywide availability of free dog waste bags/dispensers, and more recently, implemented a National Campaign under the Caru Cymru banner.

5. Consultation

The responses to the Public Consultation were supportive and justified the aim of a continuation of the dog control powers, which include the control of dog fouling, exclusions and dogs on lead under direction.

The decision is also based on the view that the current arrangement is a fair one, which reflects the aspirations of the public who need to see the public spaces free of dog fouling and also considers the needs of those who need to exercise their dogs.

See Appendix 2 (AT2) for an analysis of the results of the public consultation.

6. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The act imposes a welfare duty on the Council to carry out sustainable development work by acting in conjunction with the 'sustainable development principle'.

This means that the impact on people in the future needs to be considered when making decisions. We do this using the 'five ways of working'.

The input of residents, service users and other stakeholders is of key importance in any consultation relating to dog control and working closely together is a key part of the enforcement and awareness raising process. In the context of dog control, we already collaborate with the following:

- **Internal and Interdepartmental** - Street Cleaning Services, Tîm Tacluso Ardal Ni (Tidy Teams), Pest Control, Maritime and Public Protection.
- **Locally** – Members, Community Councils, Residents, Schools and young people.
- **National** - Welsh Government, Police and Keep Wales Tidy.

Enforcement and awareness raising to prevent or reduce problems is an ongoing issue that requires sustained commitment, including consideration of new ideas, innovation, broader best practice and of course collaboration.

Perceptions and expectations change and increase over time and our recent experience has highlighted an increase in the number of new owners and dogs highlighting the need to plan ahead.

In addition to the need to integrate services internally, there is a need to continue to collaborate and develop new relationships at regional and national level.

7. Equalities Impact Assessment, Welsh Language and Socio-Economic Duty

In 2021, a detailed equalities assessment was prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, and it was concluded that no meritorious reason had been disclosed not to continue with the process of submitting the Proposed Order. Appendix 2 (AT2) has been updated in 2024, although reflecting the results of the new consultation Appendix 1 (AT1). The assessment review has not highlighted an impact that would justify modifying or not extending the order.

8. Next Steps

- In order to monitor the order and how it is operated, the team in accordance with specialist training, legislation and operational guidance. We monitor the number of Fines, Complaints (Ffos), Street Cleanliness Survey - which includes the percentage of streets where dog fouling is present. We also keep relevant records to awareness campaigns, press releases, etc.
- Monitoring the numbers of fines and responses to dog fouling problems that will arise over the winter period – there is a significant increase in winter due to dark nights.
- Implementing recommendations made by the Scrutiny Committee.

Background Information

Cabinet Report - Public Space Protection Order (GDMC): Dog Control

Link - [Programme for Cabinet on Tuesday, 27th July, 2021, 1.00 a.m. \(gov.wales\)](#) – Item 10

Other useful links:

[Fixed penalty notices \(FPNs\) for environmental offences: guidance | GOV. WALES](#)

[Tackling-Dog-Fouling-min.pdf \(keepwalestidy.cymru\)](#)

[Rethinking-enforcement-for-littering-and-dog-fouling.pdf \(keepwalestidy.wales\)](#)

Appendices

- AT1 – GDMC Dog Control Equality Impact Assessment (English)
- AT2 – Dog Order Consultation Results (English)