

Wellington City Council **Annual Dog Control Report 2018-2019**

1. Introduction

The Wellington City Council, as a territorial authority, is required to manage and enforce the rules in the Dog Control Act 1996 (the Act) and subsequent amendments in 2003, 2004, 2006 and 2010.

S10A of the Act requires the Council to report annually to the Secretary of Local Government on its Dog Control Policy and practices.

This report fulfils this statutory requirement for the dog registration year: 1st July 2018 to 30 June 2019.





2. The Council's Dog Control Policy and Practices

2.1 Policy objectives

The Council adopted a Dog Policy in December 2009 making provisions relating to the control of dogs in public places, which are enforceable under the Wellington Consolidated Bylaw 2008 - Part 2: Animals.

The objectives of the policy are to:

- Ensure that the owners of dogs comply with their obligations under the Act, that dogs are well cared for and Wellingtonians are able to enjoy dog ownership;
- Prevent any danger caused by dogs to the public and to wildlife and natural habitats;

- Minimise the risk of distress and nuisance caused by dogs to the public and to wildlife and natural habitats;
- Actively promote the responsible ownership of dogs; and
- Provide for the reasonable exercise and recreational needs of dogs and their owners.

A review of the current Policy was undertaken during 2015/16. The Council adopted the finalised Dog Policy on 17th August 2016 and also agreed on areas where dogs can exercise off-leash.





The Council's Dog Control Policy and Practices

2.2 Fees

Dog registration fees, fines and impound fees contribute approximately 75% to the cost of dog control in Wellington City. The Council also operates a responsible dog owner scheme, which provides a discounted rate for dog owners who meet the relevant criteria. Dog registration fees are set by council resolution.

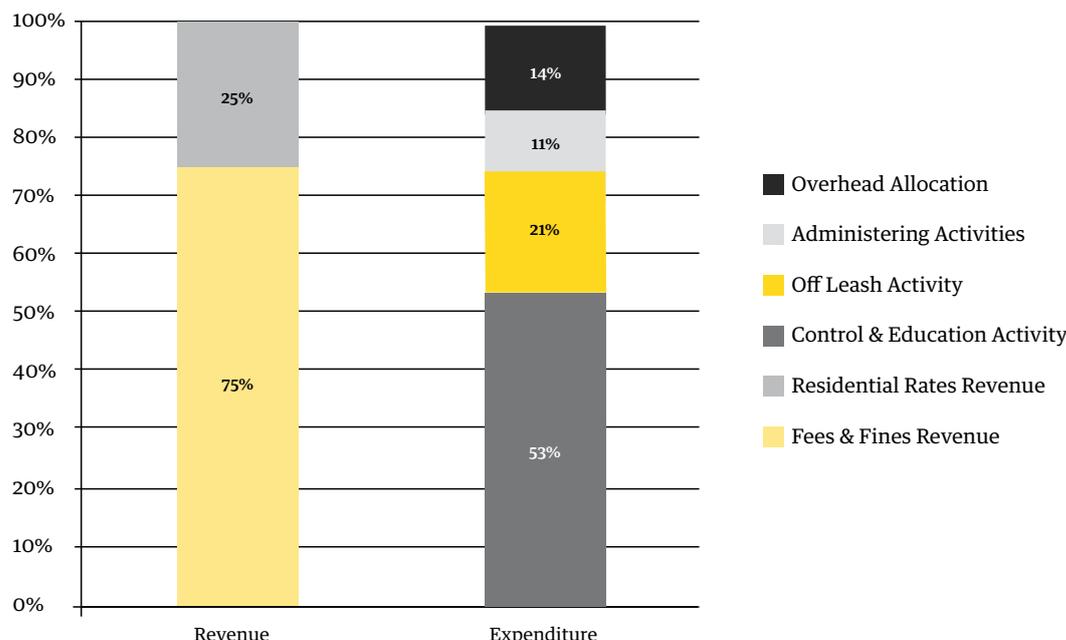
On 14th March 2019 as part of the annual plan process, Councillors agreed to increase the dog registration fees to take account of inflationary rises. These new fees are detailed on WCC's public website. During the financial year 2019/20 fees for new registrations will be applied at registration. Renewal fees will be applied at the next renewal time (ie July 2020).

Fees are used for:

- Dog control activities including law enforcement, patrols and complaint investigation.
- Education programmes for schools, community groups and businesses.
- Signs and promotion of the Council's animal bylaw and dog policy.
- Providing shelter facilities.
- Running the dog registration programme - this includes forms, printing, tags, maintaining the national dog database and related promotional material.

The graph below sets out the level of income and expenditure in relation to dog control activities during the year:

Dog revenue and expenditure - 2018/19





3. Key Achievements

Responsible dog owner training

WCC launched a new, free responsible dog owner course, which was well attended (by approximately 170 people). Attendees were a mixture of new dog owners and people thinking about getting a dog. Four courses ran between November 2018 and March 2019 at the ASB Sports Centre, Churton Park, Strathmore and the Central Library. These courses focussed on training the owner about their responsibilities rather than training the dog.

Community engagement

As part of our community engagement programme Animal Services staff attended Wellington Rugby's Crouch, Paws, Engage! event where dog owners were permitted to take along their dogs to the stadium. All dogs were well behaved and this is the second fund raising event where council and the rugby club worked together to show pets can be part of a great event.

Animal Services staff continued to participate in the annual Christmas parades held in various communities where we were able to promote good dog ownership habits.

Our Animal Services team also attended the Newtown festival, promoting dog registration, responsible dog ownership, dog adoptions and general behavioural and training advice for newer dog owners.

The annual Dogs in Togs event was held again this year at Khandallah pool which saw Animal Services officers working well with our dog owners who participated.

Pop up registration events

Wellington City Council Animal Services continued the pop up registration stands at Oriental Parade and selected dog exercise areas around the city. Well over 100 registrations were achieved at these events. Being out and about and interacting with dog owners especially in the weekends has been very successful in achieving registration compliance. We have also been able to offer microchipping and dog training advice to people attending these events.

Through continued community engagement with pop up events and the commitment from our Animal Services staff to be involved with our dog owning communities we have seen an encouraging increase in registration compliance, microchipping, desexing with responsible behaviours applied to dog ownership.

We will be continuing with this programme as the feedback from our communities through social media and contact through council has been extremely positive.

Staff training

Animal Services staff received pet first aid training which will be useful for operational work and in animal emergency situations.

Traffic Management courses were also attended during this past year so that officers moving stray stock on public roadways are able to manage traffic in the accepted manner.

Officers attended de-escalation training to gain further skills in responding to situations where there is a risk they may be attacked.

Dog Owner's discussion group

This year the Council introduced a dog owner's discussion group, attended by councillors, council staff and a number of representatives from the dog owner and dog trainer communities. Subjects discussed to date have been:

- Dog parks - are they fit for purpose and in the right locations. Do they have adequate signage to remind owners of their obligations?
- Responsible dog owner training - does the new in-house course delivered by the animal control team do the job?
- How to promote /raise awareness of 'dogs on leash' areas

Neutering menacing dogs - how many this year?

In 2016 the Department for Internal Affairs launched a nationwide campaign for the neutering of menacing dogs. In January 2017 we were successful in obtaining a DIA grant to fund the neutering of all dogs in Wellington classified as menacing. Under the Act, a dog may be classified as menacing if it belongs to a breed and type currently banned from importation, or if the local authority considers the dog poses a threat to people or animals on the basis of its behaviour.

We have been working alongside our SPCA partners to contact the owners of menacing dogs and arrange for neutering to take place.

Although this initiative has now ended, we continue to use the residual funding to neuter menacing dogs. During the 2018/2019 year six dogs were neutered.



4. Dog Control Statistics

4.1 Dogs registered

2018/2019	2017/2018	2016/2017	2015/2016	2014/2015
11897	11615	11398	11039	10716

4.2 Dangerous and menacing dogs

Number of dogs that have been classified as **dangerous** this year (S31 Dog Control Act 1996):

Category	2018/2019	2017/2018	2016/2017	2015/2016	2014/2015
Dangerous by owner conviction S31(1)(a)	0	0	1	0	8
Dangerous by sworn evidence S31(1)(b)	5	1	6	5	0
Dangerous by owner admitting in writing S31(1)(c)	0	0	0	0	2
Total dangerous dogs classified	5	1	7	5	10

Number of dogs that have been classified as **menacing** this year (S 33A and S33C):

Category	2018/2019	2017/2018	2016/2017	2015/2016	2014/2015
Menacing by behaviour (S33A(1)(b)(i))	2	7	4	14	7
Menacing by breed characteristics (S33A(1)(b)(ii))	15	0	16	23	7
Menacing by Schedule 4 breed S33C(1)	5	12	19	36	28
Total menacing dogs classified	22	19	39	73	42

4.3 Number of infringement notices issued:

2018/2019	2017/2018	2016/2017	2015/2016	2014/2015
101	110	117	125	169

4.4 Probationary owners and disqualified owners:

We have not disqualified or applied probationary classifications on any dog owners during this period.

4.5 Number of dog owners prosecuted by Wellington City Council:

We undertook 1 successful prosecution of a dog owner this year.



4.6 Dog related complaints: Response to service requests:

The target time for responses to service requests is within one hour for urgent requests and 24 hours for non-urgent requests:

**Urgent complaints responded to within 1 hour - 95%
(the target is 100%)**

**Non-urgent complaints responded to within 24 hours - 97%
(the target is 100%)**

We did not reach our 100% target due to issues with our IT system not feeding complaints directly through to our animal control officers. We have now introduced a system where the contact centre staff recording urgent complaints also telephone the animal control team as a backup.

Details of complaints received:

Category	2018/2019	2017/2018	2016/2017	2015/2016	2014/2015
Attacks on people	56	48	39	51	39
Attacks on animals	77	80	68	73	66
Barking dogs	660	651	627	809	593
Uncontrolled dogs	731	805	775	785	735
Miscellaneous	655	783	796	1020	937
Total number of dog related complaints	2179	2367	2305	2738	2370

For this reporting year, miscellaneous complaints can be broken down into the following categories:

Category	2018/2019	2017/2018	2016/2017
Challenging (dog may be on a lead but moves towards person/animal)	95	106	95
Education (giving advice to owner)	0	5	14
Fouling	55	32	50
Relinquishing a dog (handing dog over)	2	7	1
Stray pickups	501	632	633
Concerns for welfare	2	1	3
Total	655	783	796



