

Report

Date : 26 August 2020

To : Mayor and Councillors
Tararua District Council

From : Craig Lunn
Manager Regulatory Services

Subject : **Annual Dog Control Act Report to the Secretary of Local Government**

Item No : **11.4**

1. Reason for the Report

1.1 To obtain the Council's adoption of this annual report on the administration of dog control necessary to comply with the requirements of the Dog Control Act 1996.

2. Background

2.1 The Council is required to report each financial year on its dog control policies and practices, and statistical information under Section 10A of the Dog Control Act 1996.

2.2 A copy of the report must be sent to the Secretary for Local Government within one month of the report being adopted by Council.

3. Policy on Dogs

3.1 Council adopted its Dog Control Policy and Bylaw on 5 November 2018.

3.2 A review of Council's Dog Control Policy and Bylaw is due by 5 November 2023.

4. Accommodation

4.1 The Council operates one dog pound located at Easton Street in Dannevirke. This facility has the capacity to kennel up to eighteen dogs with an administrative area and exercise yards.

5. Personnel

5.1 The animal control team is based within the Regulatory Services Department and reports to the Manager Regulatory Services.

5.2 The team comprises one Team Leader, two Animal Control Officers, with one Animal Control Administrator for support.

5.3 The animal control team duties include:

- Investigating and resolving dog complaints and attacks;
- Enforcement of dog control policy and law;
- Education programmes around dog safety;
- Cleaning the pound facility to prevent disease spread;
- Feeding and providing care for impounded dogs;
- Returning, rehoming or euthanising impounded dogs;
- Maintenance of Council's dog registration and dog impounding databases.
- Other duties also include roaming stock.

6. Operating Hours

6.1 Officers are on duty during business hours, from 8am to 5pm during weekdays.

6.2 Council has contracted a security company to provide its afterhours animal control services. A new contractor was appointed on 1 July 2020.

6.3 Afterhours services include responding to dog attacks, secured/restrained dogs and roaming dogs on state highways (Priority 1). Also included are barking dogs (Priority 2).

6.4 The contractor also feeds impounded dogs and cleans the pound facility outside of business hours.

7. Dog Registration

7.1 3,209 people (previously registered) were known to own dogs in the district. The number of owners has increased by 0.5% compared to the previous year (3,194).

7.2 6,873 dogs (previously registered) were known to be in the district. The number of dogs has decreased by 0.7% compared to the previous year (6,923).

7.3 79 dogs (previously registered) remained unregistered at the end of the year. The number of unregistered dogs has decreased by 40% compared to the previous year (133).

8. Fees

8.1 Council's Revenue and Financing Policy requires the activity be 95% funded by dog registration and pound fees with the balance funded from general rates.

8.2 Fees and charges under the Dog Control Act 1996 are reviewed annually. The table below compares the dog registration fee categories.

Category	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Urban Domestic Dog	\$80.00	\$82.00	\$84.00	\$95.00	\$95.00
Preferred Owner Dog	\$40.00	\$45.00	\$45.00	\$50.00	\$50.00
Rural Domestic Dog	\$35.00	\$36.00	\$32.00	\$40.00	\$40.00
Working Dog	\$30.00	\$30.00	\$32.00	\$40.00	\$40.00
Disability Assist Dog	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00

8.3 All dogs are required to be registered by 1 August. A 50% penalty fee is applied for late registration after this date. After three months, the owners of any unregistered dogs are served with infringement notices, which are referred to the district court for collection if unpaid.

9. Preferred Owners

9.1 There is a financial incentive with reduced fees by being classified as a 'Preferred Owner'. A Preferred Owner must have an adequately fenced property to confine their dogs, adequate accommodation for their dogs, and demonstrate good dog management practices.

9.2 527 dogs were classified as preferred owner. These dogs are considered a lower risk to public safety. The number of these dogs has increased by 6% compared to the previous year (497).

10. Dog Education

10.1 15 articles were published to provide dog education. Articles covered dog registration, dog safety, nuisance barking, microchips and preferred ownership.

11. Complaints

11.1 874 complaints were received about dogs. Complaints have decreased by 13% compared to the previous year (1,013).

11.2 86 of the complaints were received about dogs attacking or rushing people or other animals. These complaints have increased compared to the previous year (67).

11.3 The majority of complaints (743) were in relation to barking and roaming. The number of these complaints have decreased by 17% from the previous year (899).

12. Impounded Dogs

12.1 In 2019/20 213 dogs were impounded. Of the 219 impounded dogs that were resolved during the year 154 (70%) were collected by their owner, 32 (15%) were rehomed, and 33 (15%) were euthanised.

13. Dangerous and Menacing Dogs

13.1 All owners of dangerous and menacing dogs are recorded on the Council's dog database. Owners are written to at the time of the dangerous or menacing classification being applied, advising them of their legal responsibilities as the owner.

13.2 11 dogs were classified as dangerous and 113 dogs were classified as menacing in the 2019/20 year. All of these dogs were classified because of observed or reported behaviour of the dog. These breeds or types were mainly American Pit Bull Terriers.

14. Infringements

14.1 In 2019/20 43 infringement notices were issued. This is an increase from the previous year (16).

15. Prosecutions

15.1 Five prosecutions were initiated during the year for dog attacks. All were determined by the Court and resulted in successful convictions for offences against the Dog Control Act.

16. Probationary and Disqualified Owners

16.1 There were no probationary and three disqualified dog owners in the 2019/20 year.

17. Dog Parks

17.1 The Council operates one dog exercise area at Mangatera in Dannevirke, which is well used by dog owners. No additional dog exercise areas were established during the year.

18. Statistical Information

18.1 The table below is a comparative summary of dog control statistics, including a breakdown of types of dog related complaints.

Category	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
No. of Dogs (Previously Registered)	6,615	6,143	6,838	6,923	6,873
No. of Owners	3,079	3,100	3,155	3,195	3,209
No. of Probationary Owners	0	0	0	0	0
No. of Disqualified owners	0	0	4	2	3
No. of Dogs Classified Dangerous (s31)	8	10	12	11	11
No. of Dogs Classified Menacing (s33A) – Behaviour or Characteristics	36	26	25	32	34
No. of Dogs Classified Menacing (s33C) - Breed	101	94	97	91	79
No. of Dog Complaints	1,181	1,061	1,130	1,013	874
<i>Dog Attack</i>	53	43	42	49	62
<i>Rushing Dog</i>	21	31	26	18	24
<i>Aggressive Dog</i>	30	31	46	35	33
<i>Rushing Dog</i>	21	31	26	18	24
<i>Roaming / Uncontrolled / Secured Dog</i>	512	453	533	459	363
<i>Barking Dog</i>	525	465	452	440	380
<i>Dog Bylaw Breach</i>	14	5	3	3	0
<i>Dog Welfare Concern</i>	26	33	28	9	12
No. of Infringements	0	82	74	16	43
No. of Prosecutions	0	0	3	2	5

19. Significance Assessment

- 19.1 This item does not trigger Council's significance and engagement policy, and it has no financial impacts on the approved Long Term Plan.

20. Conclusion

- 20.1 The Council consider and adopt this annual report on the administration of dog control policies and practices and statistical information.

21. Recommendation

- 21.1 That the report from the Manager Regulatory Services dated 26 August 2020 concerning the Annual Dog Control Act Report to the Secretary of Local Government (as circulated) be received and adopted.**



Attachments

Nil.