

Report

Date : 1 September 2021

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 : **11.2**

1. Recommendation

- 1.1 *That the report from the Manager Regulatory Services dated 30 July 2021 concerning the Annual Dog Control Act Report to the Secretary of Local Government (as circulated) be received and adopted.*

2. Reason for the Report

- 2.1 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.

3. Background

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 A copy of the report must be sent to the Secretary for Local Government within one month of the report being adopted by Council.

4. Policy on Dogs

- 4.1 The Council adopted its Dog Control Policy and Bylaw on 5 November 2018.
- 4.2 A review of the Council's Dog Control Policy and Bylaw is due by 5 November 2023.

5. Accommodation

5.1 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.

6. Personnel

6.1 The animal control team is based within the Regulatory Services Department and reports to the Manager Regulatory Services. The team comprises one Team Leader, two Animal Control Officers, with one Animal Control Support Officer for support.

6.2 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

7. Operating Hours

7.1 Officers are on duty from 8am to 5pm during weekdays.

7.2 Council has contracted a security company to provide its afterhours animal control services.

7.3 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).

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

8. Dog Registration

8.1 3,271 people (previously registered) were known to own dogs in the district. The number of owners has increased by 1.9% compared to the previous year (3,209).

8.2 6,953 dogs (previously registered) were known to be in the district. The number of dogs has increased by 1.2% compared to the previous year (6,873).

8.3 73 dogs (previously registered) remained unregistered at the end of the year. The number of unregistered dogs has decreased by 7.6% compared to the previous year (79).

9. Fees

9.1 Council’s Revenue and Financing Policy requires the activity be 85% funded by dog registration and pound fees with the balance funded from general rates.

9.2 Fees and charges under the Impounding Act 1955 and Dog Control Act 1996 are reviewed annually. The table below compares the dog registration fee categories.

Category	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Urban Domestic Dog	\$82.00	\$84.00	\$95.00	\$95.00	\$115.00
Preferred Owner Dog	\$45.00	\$45.00	\$50.00	\$50.00	\$65.00
Rural Domestic Dog	\$36.00	\$32.00	\$40.00	\$40.00	\$50.00
Working Dog	\$30.00	\$32.00	\$40.00	\$40.00	\$50.00
Disability Assist Dog	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00

9.3 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.

10. Preferred Owners

10.1 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.

10.2 617 dogs were classified as preferred owner. These dogs are considered a lower risk to public safety. The number of these dogs has increased by 24.1% compared to the previous year (497).

11. Dog Education

11.1 18 articles were published to provide dog education. Articles covered dog registration, dog safety, nuisance barking, microchips and preferred ownership.

12. Complaints

12.1 738 complaints were received about dogs. Complaints have decreased by 15% compared to the previous year (874).

12.2 83 of the complaints were received about dogs attacking/biting or rushing people or other animals. These complaints have decreased compared to the previous year (86).

12.3 The majority of the complaints (606) were in relation to barking and roaming. The number of these complaints have decreased by 18.4% from the previous year (743).

13. Impounded Dogs

13.1 207 dogs were impounded during the year.

13.2 Of the 204 impounded dogs that were resolved during the year 157 (77%) were collected by their owner, 24 (12%) were rehomed, and 22 (11%) were euthanised.

14. Dangerous and Menacing Dogs

14.1 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.

14.2 10 dogs were classified as dangerous and 128 dogs were classified as menacing during the 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.

15. Infringements

15.1 During the year, 33 infringement notices were issued. This is a decrease from the previous year (43).

16. Prosecutions

16.1 5 prosecutions were initiated during the year for dog attacks.

17. Probationary and Disqualified Owners

17.1 There were no probationary and 8 disqualified dog owners during the year.

18. Dog Parks

18.1 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.

19. Statistical Information

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

Category	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
No. of Dogs (Previously Registered)	6,143	6,838	6,923	6,873	6,953
No. of Owners	3,100	3,155	3,195	3,209	3,271
No. of Probationary Owners	0	0	0	0	0
No. of Disqualified owners	0	4	2	3	8
No. of Dogs Classified Dangerous (s31)	10	12	11	11	10
No. of Dogs Classified Menacing (s33A) – Behaviour or Characteristics	26	25	32	34	42
No. of Dogs Classified Menacing (s33C) – Breed	94	97	91	79	86
No. of Dog Complaints	1,056	1,127	1,010	874	738
<i>Dog Attacking/Biting</i>	43	42	49	62	65
<i>Rushing Dog</i>	31	26	18	24	18
<i>Aggressive Behaviour Dog</i>	31	46	35	33	35
<i>Wandering / Roaming / Secured / Restrained Dog</i>	453	533	459	363	378
<i>Barking Dog</i>	465	452	440	380	228
<i>Dog Welfare Concern</i>	33	28	9	12	14
No. of Infringements	82	74	16	43	33
No. of Prosecutions	0	3	2	5	5

20. Significance Assessment

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

21. Conclusion

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

Attachments

Nil.