

Report

Date : 20 September 2018

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. 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. Accommodation

3.1 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. In February 2018 Council closed its second dog pound located at Station Street in Woodville.

4. Personnel

4.1 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 administrative support.

4.2 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; and maintenance of Council's dog registration and dog impounding databases. Other duties also include roaming stock.

5. Operating Hours

5.1 Officers are on duty from 8am to 5pm on week days. After hours animal control services for dog attacks and aggressive dogs are provided by a security contractor. The contractor also feeds impounded dogs and cleans the pound facility outside working hours.

6. Dog Registration

6.1 6,838 dogs were registered in 2017/18 to 3,148 owners. This is an increase of 1% of registered dogs from the previous year.

7. Fees

7.1 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.

7.2 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	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Urban Domestic Dog	\$80.00	\$82.00	\$84.00
Preferred Owner Dog	\$40.00	\$45.00	\$45.00
Rural Domestic Dog	\$35.00	\$36.00	\$32.00
Working Dog	\$30.00	\$30.00	\$32.00
Disability Assist Dog	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00

7.3 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.

8. Preferred Owners

8.1 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.

8.2 461 dogs were registered in 2017/18 to Preferred Owners. This is an increase of 20% of registered dogs from the previous year.

9. Community Education

9.1 The animal control team published twelve education articles in 2017/18 in the Bush Telegraph. The topics covered registration, stock and public safety, microchipping, uncontrolled dogs, prohibited areas, nuisance barking, and preferred ownership.

9.2 A dog trainer was contracted to implement a dog education programme in schools. However, no presentations were provided to schools due to lack of interest. The programme was stopped in June 2018.

10. Complaints

10.1 A total of 1,130 dog-related complaints were received in 2017/18. The number of reported dog attacks decreased by 2% from the previous year. The most frequent type of complaint was roaming/uncontrolled/secured dogs (47%) followed by barking dogs (40%). The number of barking dog complaints decreased by 3% from the previous year.

11. Impounded Dogs

11.1 In 2017/18 338 dogs were impounded. Of the 329 impounded dogs that were resolved during the year 217 (66%) were collected by their owner, 70 (21%) were rehomed, and 42 (13%) were euthanised.

12. Dangerous and Menacing Dogs

12.1 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.

12.2 12 dogs were classified as dangerous and 122 dogs were classified as menacing in the 2017/18 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.

13. Infringements

13.1 In 2017/18 74 infringement notices were issued. This is a decrease of 10% from the previous year.

14. Prosecutions

14.1 Three 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.

15. Probationary and Disqualified Owners

15.1 There were no probationary and four disqualified dog owners in the 2017/18 year.

16. Dog Parks

16.1 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.

17. Statistical Information

17.1 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
No. of Registered Dogs	6,615	6,143	6,838
No. of Probationary Owners	0	0	0
No. of Disqualified owners	0	0	4
No. of Dogs Classified Dangerous (s31)	8	10	12
No. of Dogs Classified Menacing (s33A) – Behaviour or Characteristics	36	26	25
No. of Dogs Classified Menacing (s33C) - Breed	101	94	97
No. of Dog Complaints	1,181	1,061	1,130
<i>Dog Attack</i>	53	43	42
<i>Aggressive Dog</i>	30	31	46
<i>Rushing Dog</i>	21	31	26
<i>Roaming/Uncontrolled/Secured Dog</i>	512	453	533
<i>Barking Dog</i>	525	465	452
<i>Dog Bylaw Breach</i>	14	5	3
<i>Dog Welfare Concern</i>	26	33	28
No. of Infringements	0	82	74
No. of Prosecutions	0	0	3

18. Significance Assessment

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

19. Conclusion

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

20. Recommendation

- 20.1** *That the report from the Manager Regulatory Services dated 20 September 2018 concerning the Annual Dog Control Act Report to the Secretary of Local Government (as circulated) be received and adopted.*

Attachments

Nil.