



Summary of Proposed Changes From: Dog Control Bylaw and Policy Statement of Proposal

Summary of proposed changes

Clarification and administrative changes

Where a particular section of the Act is referenced in the Policy, wording has been amended to more accurately reflect the contents of the Act.

Map-related changes

There are proposed changes to areas along the Lower Hutt Riverbank, Honiana Te Puni Reserve (Petone), and Sunset Point (Seaview), Avalon Park (Avalon), York Park (Moera), Bell Park (Waiwhetu), and the Eastern section of Richard Prouse Park (Wainuiomata). These changes are made clear in our consultation questions. In addition, there are minor changes to other maps proposed, including tidying preexisting maps within the Bylaw for clarity (e.g. amending a map to ensure it lines up with an access point).

Commercial licence and limiting dog numbers

Council is proposing to add a commercial licence for professional dog walkers, and an exemption for people wishing to walk four or more dogs (non-commercially). This is to help ensure they can manage multiple dogs in a public place. The commercial dog walkers' licence will include officers checking the competency of those applying. In the case of non-commercial dog walkers, it will be an exemption rather than a licence. The exemption will be granted at Council's discretion and may require proof of competency.

This change is being proposed due to issues arising from dog walkers losing control of the large numbers of dogs they are walking and Council receiving complaints from the community.

Always maintaining control of your dog, regardless of it being on a lead, is an essential part of the Bylaw and Policy. The impact of this proposed change will primarily affect those individuals walking other peoples' dogs rather than private dog owners.

Council determines this change to the Bylaw is the most appropriate way of controlling commercial dog walkers (and controlling non-commercial dog walkers who wish to walk four or more dogs). This is because of the potential safety risk to both the general public and other dogs, as well as the potential for nuisance to the community from uncontrolled dogs. Council is proposing to make this change for groups of four or more dogs (that are under the responsibility of one individual).

This proposed change to licence commercial dog walkers will help to promote dog walking professionals who are experienced and are effective dog handlers. This will allow the community to have greater confidence when choosing professionals they pay to look after their dogs. Implementing this proposed change will give Animal Services officers the ability to enforce the rules when there are instances of irresponsible and unsafe dog handling.

The proposed change to require commercial dog walkers to apply for a license was introduced by Wellington City Council during their last review of their dog control measures. This change in Lower Hutt would help to make the rules consistent across the two neighbouring communities.

Council could have implemented a ban on walking more than four dogs. However, Council recognises the need for quality-assured commercial dog walking services (and in some cases a private individual needing to walk more than four dogs), and this license requirement supports this. Therefore, Council proposes that this change to the Bylaw is the most appropriate form of the Bylaw.

Working dogs in the Policy

Council is proposing to amend its Policy to include some additional wording around working dogs as well as a working dogs registration form, to provide clarity to the community, and reflect what is prescribed under the Act.

Under Section 36 of the Act, working dogs are required to be registered by the age of 3 months. Under Section 37(2)(b) of the Act, Council may fix fees for working dogs that are lower than would otherwise be payable to non-working dogs.

This proposed change to the wording of the Policy will help to address confusion around the definition of “working dogs” by directing community members to the [Act’s definition](#) and the Council’s fees schedule.

You can find the fees and charges for dogs [at this link](#).

A summary of all proposed changes is provided in the table below.

Summary of proposed changes to Council’s Dog Control Bylaw and Policy

Issues/Themes	Source	Impact	Comment/proposal
Roaming dogs	Survey feedback	Safety concerns	The Bylaw and Policy provide appropriate rules and powers for managing roaming dogs. No change.
Not enough enforcement	Survey feedback	Nuisance and safety concerns	The Bylaw provides appropriate powers for officers to enforce the rules. No change.
Public safety	Survey feedback	Safety concerns	The Bylaw and Policy provide appropriate rules and powers for keeping people and dogs safe. No change.
Irresponsible owners	Survey feedback	Nuisance and safety concerns	The Bylaw and Policy provide appropriate powers for officers to issue infringements and warnings to irresponsible dog owners. No change.
Barking dogs	Survey feedback	Nuisance	The Bylaw and Policy provide appropriate rules and powers for managing barking dogs. No change.
Issues on shared paths	Survey & internal feedback	Safety concerns	Focus on educational approach to shared spaces (e.g. paths running through dog exercise areas).
Unclear wording in Policy and Bylaw	Internal feedback	Lack of clarity	Update wording where appropriate.
Policy and Bylaw could	Internal feedback	Lack of clarity	Review the Policy and Bylaw against the Act and update where appropriate.

better reflect the Act			
Inaccurate maps	Internal feedback	Lack of clarity	Review and update all maps in the Bylaw.
Proposed amendments to maps in significant areas	Survey & internal feedback	Changes dog exercise and dog on-lead areas in specific locations	Review and update relevant maps in the Bylaw to show amended dog exercise and dog-on-lead areas.
Maps do not align with consent conditions	Consent conditions	Changes the dog on-lead area at Sunset Point, Seaview	Review and update the relevant map.
Would like more dog exercise areas	Survey feedback	Changes to dog on-lead and exercise areas	Review and update the relevant map and wording in the Bylaw.
Licence for commercial dog walkers	Internal feedback & complaints	Safety concerns	Amend Bylaw to include licensing for commercial dog walkers
Limits on the number of dogs individuals can walk - and exemptions	Internal and external feedback	Safety concerns	Amend Bylaw to include wording for controlling the number of dogs an individual can walk, and the opportunity for people to apply for an exemption to the rule.
Inconsistent summertime restrictions	Internal feedback	Lack of clarity	Review and update relevant wording (e.g. refer to summer months or daylight saving).