

Lound Lakes Consultation Responses

required to provide their dogs with appropriate daily exercise, including “regular opportunities to walk and run”, which in most cases will be off lead while still under control.

Their ability to meet this requirement is greatly affected by the amount of publicly accessible parks and other public places in their area where dogs can exercise without restrictions. This section of the Animal Welfare Act was included in the statutory guidance produced for local authorities by the Home Office on the use of PSPOs.

Accordingly, the underlying principle we seek to see applied is that dog controls should be the least restrictive to achieve a given defined and measurable outcome; this is the approach used by Natural England. In many cases, a seasonal or time of day restriction will be effective and the least restrictive approach, rather than a blanket year-round restriction. For instance, a “dogs on lead” order for a picnic area is unlikely to be necessary in mid-winter. We suggest the council considers whether a time limited restriction could be introduced at the Herringfleet Hills and Lound Lakes sites. Such that dog walkers still have the ability to let their dogs off lead for some period of the day and there is also an opportunity for people to avoid off lead dogs at other times during the day, when the restriction is in force.

The Government provided clear instructions to local authorities that they must provide restriction free sites for dog walkers to exercise their dogs. This message was contained in the guidance document for DCOs, and has been retained in both the Defra/Welsh Government and Home Office PSPO guidance documents, with the Defra guidance for PSPOs stating ‘local authorities should ensure there are suitable alternatives for dogs to be exercised without restrictions’.

Dogs on lead by direction

The Kennel Club welcomes ‘dogs on lead by direction’ orders, as these allow responsible dog owners to exercise their dogs off lead without restriction providing their dogs are under control, whilst allowing the local authority powers to restrict dogs not under control. We would also recommend local authorities make use of the other more flexible and targeted measures at their disposal such as Acceptable Behavioural Contracts and Community Protection Notices. Kennel Club Good Citizen Training Clubs and our accredited trainers can also help those people whose dogs run out of control due to them not having the ability to train a good recall.

Assistance dogs

We welcome the intent to include exemptions for those who rely on assistance dogs, however we would suggest further consideration of the wording contained within the draft Order, specifically with reference to how “Assistance Dog” is defined.

A number of well-known assistance dog providers are members of Assistance Dogs UK. This umbrella group, currently has eight member organisations which can be viewed here - <http://www.assistancedogs.org.uk/>. However, it is important to note that the membership of Assistance Dogs UK is not a definitive list of all UK assistance dog organisations, and may change during the currency of the PSPO, it also does not provide for owner trained assistance dogs. We would therefore encourage the Council to allow some flexibility when considering whether a disabled person’s dog is acting as an assistance dog.

The Council could consider adopting the definitions of assistance dogs as used by Northumberland Country Council which can be found on page 2 of the attached document;

“(4) The term “Assistance Dog” shall mean a dog which has been trained to assist a person with a disability.

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events, group parties with fires, littering and fly tipping all of which will have a wholly negative effect on the activities of the landowner, environment and, most importantly, the local community. I object in the strongest terms and request you do not place these restrictions on the area of Lound Lakes.