



Subject:	Future Provision of Dog Off Lead Facilities
Date:	7 th March 2017
Reporting Officer:	Nigel Grimshaw, Director City & Neighbourhood Services Department
Contact Officer:	Rose Crozier, Assistant Director City & Neighbourhood Services Department

Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	<p>The Clean Neighbourhoods Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 which became law in April 2012 allowed Council to introduce four dog control orders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Prohibit dog fouling▪ Make it an offence to allow dogs off lead in designated areas;▪ Exclude dogs from designated areas; and▪ Limit the number of dogs that one person can be in control of at any one time.
1.2	<p>In October 2012 a city wide dog control order for dog fouling came in to operation and in April 2013 a dog control order limiting the number of dogs a person could take on land to 4 came in to operation.</p>
1.3	<p>A city wide consultation exercise was carried out regarding the remaining two dog orders in December 2012 and with such a high level of feedback received, particularly with regards to the exclusion order, it was decided to postpone the implementation of the remaining two dog control orders to allow for further consultation and a wider analysis of user needs. The feedback received, highlighted the requirement for facilities that allow dogs to exercise off lead. To inform decisions on future provision it was proposed to run a pilot in North Belfast and introduce a dog enclosure in Grove Park.</p>

1.4	The pilot has now been in operation for over 2 years and the continued consultation process surrounding the pilot has helped us to better understand all the issues and complexities around the dog control orders and has assisted Council officers to consider multiple options to assist with the implementation of the remaining orders.
1.5	This report seeks authority to conduct engagement within local areas to determine the need for dogs off lead facilities.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Note that work is progressing to establish facilities in Parks and Open Spaces as outlined. ▪ Support an engagement process through the Area Working Groups to determine local area needs. A consultation and engagement exercise will be conducted across each area facilitated. ▪ Grant permission for officers to work up a consultation and engagement framework, including a communications plan to assist Council officers to consult with dog owners and park users to seek an appropriate option for each park
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>Through research three options have been identified as operationally feasible. These options will be easily monitored and the terms of use can be enforced effectively by the warden service. The options are outlined below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Introduction of dog enclosures in various parks across the city. These enclosures would be similar to the enclosure that has been piloted in Grove Park and would be most suitable for parks that have large sections dedicated to sports pitches, playgrounds and community vegetable gardens. The fenced enclosure creates no doubt or confusion with regards to where dogs are allowed off leads in that particular park. 2. “Off lead Areas” in various parks across the city – These areas would have adequate signage in order to clearly demarcate the area that dogs are allowed to run free. This option is best suited to larger parks with no football pitches where natural features

	<p>i.e. hedges, tree lines, rivers or fence lines and pathways could be used as boundaries.</p> <p>3. Time zoning system – A system that dogs to be off their lead in the entire park but only at certain times of the day. This system is best suited to small Parks and open spaces where it would be difficult to erect a dog enclosure or operate off lead zones.</p> <p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p>
3.2	<p>Financial implications will be provided once requirements are defined.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p>
3.3	<p>The equality and good relations implications of the various options will be considered as part of the ongoing consultation and engagement process and the final recommendations will be equality screened in line with the Council’s process.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None