

Appendix 1

Why is there a need for a dog policy?

A dog policy helps to establish clear guidelines and a framework regards the roles and responsibilities for responsible dog ownership and how this is managed across a number of key stakeholders. The aim of the policy is to:

- Establish a clear set of guidelines for responsible dog ownership.
- Detail how the Council will deal with dog related incidents.
- Create a safer environment for the local community.

The refreshed policy states how Broxtowe Borough Council (the Council) operates in relation to issues of dog control. It covers a number of areas including stray dogs, fouling, microchipping, and dangerous dogs.

Nationally, it is estimated that there has been a 5% increase in dog ownership since 2018 (Source: Pet Food Manufacturers' Association (PFMA), 2023 statistics). Table 1 and Figure 1, details the number of dog related incidents the Neighbourhood Wardens have dealt with across the Borough since 2018.

Since 2018, there has been a:

- 56% decrease in the number of stray dogs.
- 105% increase in the serious dog complaints

Year	Strays	Serious Dog Complaints	Community protection Warnings/ Community Protection Notices issued	Dog Fouling Fixed Penalty Notices	Dog Education events	Other (Assisting Emergency Services/ Welfare Concerns)
2018/19	119	37	10	2	8	16
2019/20	122	87	4	2	8	12
2020/21	97	74	6	2	1	7
2021/22	57	84	3	2	1	4
2022/23	54	74	4	1	4	9
2023/24	52	76	6	0	2	8

Table 1: Number of dog related incidents since 2018

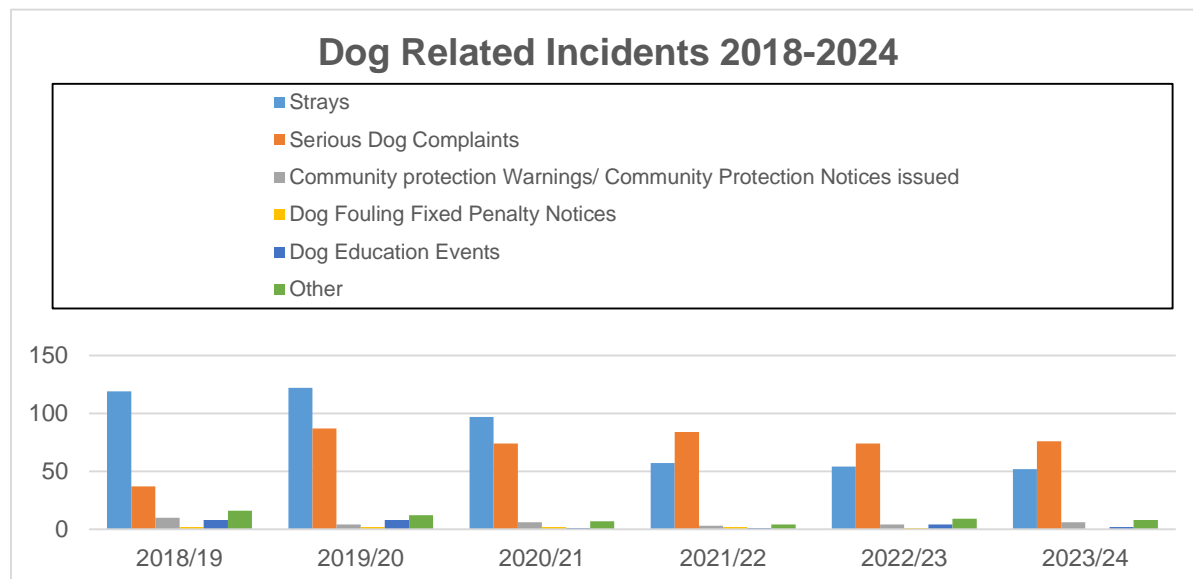


Figure 1: Dog related incidents since 2018

The surge in serious dog complaints including, dog on dog attacks, dogs not under control in a public place and intimidating aggressive behaviour, can be attributed to several factors, most notably with rise of dog ownership since the COVID-19 pandemic. This rise resulted in many dogs not receiving the necessary behavioural guidance and socialisation.

Dangerous dogs and XL bullies

The existing policy has been amended to reflect the inclusion of XL Bullies in response to their inclusion as a Dangerous Dog since January 2024. This will help to ensure that appropriate measures are in place to regulate their ownership and reduce potential risks to the public.

Stray Dogs

Dealing with stray dogs is a statutory duty of the Council and the policy clearly sets out who is responsible for managing this process. The policy outlines the procedures to follow, when the Council receives a report that a dog maybe a stray. It includes a definition of what a stray dog is, despite no explicit definition being provided in principal legislation.

However, Defra guidance does state that any dog found in a public or private place, without its owner, or not under the control of its owner or a person representing them, may be considered a stray and will be detained by an appropriate person.

The Neighbourhood Wardens are authorised to detain and seize any stray dog on public land. Where a stray dog is found on land or premises which are not public, then only with the consent of the land owner or the occupier, can the dog be removed.

Stray dogs seized by the Council are held for eight clear days at the Council's kennelling facility. Following the eight-day period, stray dogs that are not reclaimed are handed to the kennels who in turn will attempt to re-home them.

Education and Engagement

The Council works in partnership with a number of stakeholders including the Police, RSPCA, Housing, Environmental Health, Housing Associations, homeless charities and rescue centres. The Council assists these partners by:

- Promoting responsible dog ownership.
- Assisting in implementation of any changes associated with dog legislation.
- Advice on dog welfare and nuisance behaviour such as dog barking.

As part of their duties, the Neighbourhood Wardens provide guidance on responsible dog ownership. This includes:

- Checking microchips and collar tags.
- Educational stands at Council events, dog shows.
- Media campaigns.

Partnership Working – Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Initially drafted by the District Councils two years ago, the MOU outlines the responsibilities of the Council and external partnership agencies regarding dog control. It specifies who is accountable for particular functions and once agreed will be issued to all Nottinghamshire Districts to provide clarity and serve as a signposting document for relevant agencies.

Dog Control and Dangerous Dogs – Future Implications

As the issues around dog control and dangerous dogs become more visible, there may be increased pressure to make further changes to dog control legislation. This may affect how the Council reacts to certain dog reports or incidents. Any legislative changes will be monitored closely, so that appropriate measures can be implemented and amendments made to the Dog Policy, which will allow the Council to deal with them effectively.