

COUNCIL REPORT

Date : 12 July 2024
To : Ordinary Council Meeting, 6 August 2024
From : Acting Group Manager Planning and Regulatory, Annette Munday
Subject : **DOG CONTROL POLICIES AND PRACTICES REPORT 2023/24**
File ID : A1245954

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **Council is required to publicly report on its dog control policies and practices each financial year under section 10A of the Dog Control Act**
- **A copy of the Dog Control Policies and Practices Report 2023/24 is to be submitted to the Secretary for Local Government**
- **The Dog Control Policies and Practices Report 2023/24 for the 2023/24 financial year is attached.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) **That the report titled “Dog Control Policies and Practices Report 2023/02024” be received.**
- 2) **That the Dog Control Policies and Practices Report 2023/2024 attached in Appendix 1 be adopted by Council and its availability publicly notified in the Opōtiki News in accordance with Section 10A(3) of the Dog Control Act.**
- 3) **That the Dog Control Policies and Practices Report 2023/2024 attached in Appendix 1 be filed with the Secretary for Local Government (Department of Internal Affairs) in accordance with section 10A(4) of the Dog Control Act.**

PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this report is to provide Council with the annual report setting out Council’s dog control practices for the year 2023/2024 following receipt by Council, the Annual Report will be submitted to the Secretary for Local Government. The Annual Report is included in Appendix 1 attached.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

2. The matters detailed in this report relate to the following priorities from Ōpōtiki District Council's Long-Term Plan 2021-2031:
- Development and protection of the natural environment.
 - Services and facilities meet our needs.
 - Fair and efficient leadership.
 - A strong and effective community spirit.
 - Purposeful work and learning opportunities.
 - Development supports the community.
 - Culture and history are treasured.

BACKGROUND

3. The Dog Control Act requires territorial authorities to publicly report on dog control policy and practices under section 10A of the Dog Control Act.
- Section 10A of the Dog Control Act 1996 states that the report *"must, in respect of each financial year, report on the administration of -*
- a) its dog control policy adopted under section 10; and*
 - b) its dog control practices."*

Section 10A(3) specifies that *"the territorial authority must give public notice of the report in one (1) or more daily newspapers circulating in the territorial authority district."*

Section 10A(4) requires the Council, *"within one month after adopting the report, to send a copy of it to the Secretary for Local Government"*.

DISCUSSION

4. The attached report summarises the key information requirements set out in the Dog Control Act in terms of reporting. Also included below are some of the key statistics for the financial year, and reasoning for any notable changes. More generally, Animal Control staff continue to be proactive within the community. They undertake daily patrols, respond to service requests and look after the pound. They also spend time with customers on a one-on-one basis talking about the responsibilities of individual dog owners.
5. Council continues to work with the Department of Conservation regarding the change in classification for hunting dogs, to be classified as working dogs rather than a complete dog. It required that for these dogs to be considered working dogs they must undertake avian awareness

and aversion training, providing more protection for the native wildlife that is found in the Ōpōtiki bush. This initiative gave incentive for hunters to register their dogs, as well as ensuring that kiwi, weka, whio and other ground nesting birds have a higher chance of survival when coming into contact with these dogs.

Community wellbeing considerations

- 6. The purpose of Local Government now includes promotion of social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of communities in the present and for the future ('the 4 wellbeings').
- 7. The subject matter of this report has been evaluated in terms of the 4 wellbeings during the process of developing this report and there are no known social, economic, environmental, or cultural considerations associated with this matter.

SIGNIFICANCE AND ENGAGEMENT ASSESSMENT

Assessment of significance

- 8. On every issue requiring a decision, Council is required to determine how significant a decision is to the community, and what the corresponding level of engagement should be. Council uses the Significance Flowchart in the Significance and Engagement Policy to determine the level of significance.
- 9. The level of significance related to the decision in this report is considered to be low. Because the decision is determined to have low significance in accordance with the policy, the corresponding level of engagement required is Inform.

Assessment of engagement

- 10. As the level of significance has been determined to be low, the level of engagement required is Inform according to the Engagement Framework of the Significance and Engagement Policy:

INFORM	To provide balanced and objective information to assist understanding about something that is going to happen.
KŌRERO	To ask the community for feedback, ideas, opinions, and information about the development process
CONSULT	To obtain public feedback about ideas on rationale, alternatives, and proposals to inform decision making.
INVOLVE	Participatory process designed to help identify issues and views to ensure that concerns and aspirations are understood and considered.

COLLABORATE

Working together to develop an understanding, work out alternatives and identify preferred solutions.

EMPOWER

Final decision making is in the hands of the public. Under the Local Government Act 2002, the Mayor and Councillors are elected to make decisions on behalf of their constituents

11. The tools that Council will use for the 'Inform' level of engagement include a report in the public agenda of the Council meeting, a copy of the report on Council's website, a copy sent to the Secretary for Local Government, a public notice advising of the availability of the report in the newspaper and may include a public notice on Council's social media.

CONCLUSION

12. Council has compiled the Dog Control Policies and Practices 2023/24 report as required under Section 10A of the Dog Control Act and after adoption will make the report publicly available.

Annette Munday

ACTING GROUP MANAGER PLANNING AND REGULATORY

APPENDIX 1

Ōpōtiki District Council Dog Control Policies and Practices Report 2023-24

Section 10A report in accordance with the Dog Control Act 1996

1 Introduction

Ōpōtiki District Council, as a Territorial Authority, is required to manage and enforce the provisions of the Dog Control Act 1996.

This report is to meet the requirements set under Section 10A of that Act which requires Council to report on its dog control policy and practices.

This report contains information and statistics on the Council's dog control activity for financial year 2024 (1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024).

2 Dog Policy, Objectives and Practices – Section 10A (1) (a)

Ōpōtiki District Council has a Dog Policy, dated 9 November 2004 with the objectives being:

- Minimising the danger, distress and nuisance of dogs to the community generally
- Separating children and dogs in public places
- Enabling, to the extent that is practicable, the public to use streets and public amenities without fear of attack or intimidation by dogs
- The exercise and recreational needs of dogs and their owners

High priority objectives are identified as:

- The need to reduce the number of dogs roaming the streets
- The need to decrease the amount of uncontrolled breeding that occurs

Dog registration and fees are charged annually and used to fund Council's dog control functions along with rates funding given the wider public benefit that is derived by keeping the community safe.

3 Summary of Practices – Section 10A (1) (b)

The Animal control function forms part of the Planning and Regulatory Group of Council.

During the reporting period Council has had 2FTE officers dedicated to Dog Control.

Limited afterhours support is provided by Independent Security Consultants Ltd (ISCL).

The Opotiki Town Centre is patrolled at least twice a day. The purpose of these patrols is to identify non-compliance with the Dog Control Act, the Dog Control Bylaw and Policy. In this reporting period there have also been some after-hour patrols undertaken.

The patrols are also an opportunity to get out into the community and talk to dog owners about their responsibilities on an individual basis.

Patrols are also carried out to include the wider Opotiki Township, Woodlands and East Coast settlements such as Te Kaha, Waihau Bay, Ohiwa, Bryan's Beach and Paerata Ridge. East of Te Kaha patrols are undertaken on an as needed basis often through a Service Request or via N.Z. Police.

4 Dog Control Statistics

- 1454 dogs were registered during this financial year which is slightly up from the previous year.

During the annual registration period Animal Control Officers phone dog owners to remind them about the discount rate that's applied to the registration fee if paid prior to 1 August, and the need to have their dogs registered by the 1 September to avoid infringements being issued against them.

- 9 dogs were rehomed during this financial year which represents 2.9% of all dogs impounded and is the lowest percentage of dogs rehomed within a financial year. Dogs have been unable to be rehomed. This is a Nationwide problem as all rehoming facilities are full - a roll on effect from Covid
- 307 dogs were impounded. This can also be attributed to Covid with an increase in puppy litters being surrendered and abandoned
- Of the 266 dogs impounded 211 of these dogs were euthanised. This represents 79% of dogs for this financial year. This is a significant increase compared to the previous years where 66% for 2022/23 and 30% for 2021/22 were recorded and is due to the high number of puppies being abandoned and dogs being surrendered.

The de-sexing programme has reduced the amount of unwanted litters of menacing and dangerous dogs being left at the pound.

- 34 dogs impounded were returned to their owners which is the lowest percentage of dogs returned recorded within a financial year. This low percentage is due to the high number of dogs impounded and a high number of dogs and puppies being surrendered.

Following Council incentives to freely micro-chip all dogs registered prior to 1 August along with public education campaigns about micro-chipping, the number of dogs micro-chipped in the district has increased. It is easier for officers to return impounded dogs to their owners.

- There was one break-in at the pound resulting in one dog being stolen during this financial year. Those responsible were identified on CCTV and were dealt with by the police. The dogs were subsequently registered, with impoundment charges and fines paid.

This provides proof that the CCTV cameras installed within the new pound work in deterring any break outs or thefts.

Section 10A (2) information

The following information is required under section 10A (2) clauses a –g.

	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20
a. Registered Dogs	1454	1447	1511	1480	1545
b. Probationary owners	0	0	0	0	0
c. Dogs classified as dangerous	4	4	4	5	8
d. Dogs classified as menacing	66	63	69	68	35
e. Number of Infringements issued	281	219	134	103	61
f. Number of service requested	330	314	490	331	256
g. Number of Prosecutions	0	0	0	0	0

Pound Statistics

The table below shows the activity at the pound over the last five years:

Activity	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20
Dogs euthanized	211 (79%)	203 (66%)	58 (30%)	99 (43%)	79 (38%)
Dogs stolen from pound	1	1	3	1	0
Dogs returned to owner	34	61 (20%)	71 (37%)	61 (24%)	71 (34%)
Dogs rehomed	9	29 (9%)	56 (29%)	68 (27%)	61 (28%)
Dogs impounded	266	307	194	229	211

Infringement notices

There were 281 infringement notices issued by the Animal Control Officers over the 2023/24 year.

This represents a 28% increase in infringements from 2022/23.

Details are as follows:

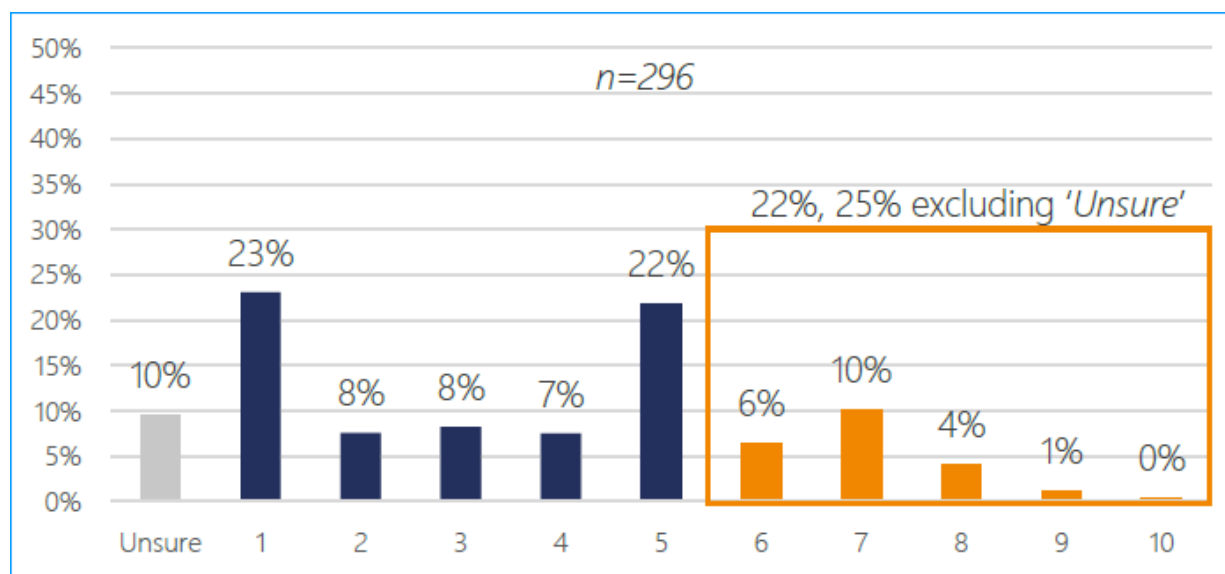
Type of Infringement	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20
Failure to register Dog	250	169	83	75	52
Failure to keep dog under control	29	45	48	20	9
Wilful Obstruction of dog control officer or ranger	1	2	1	2	0
Failure to comply with effects of classification of dog as dangerous dog	1	1	0	3	0
Failure to comply with a Bylaw	0	0	0	0	0
Falsely notifying death of a dog	0	1	0	0	0
Wilfully providing false information about a dog	0	1	0	3	0
Failure to implant microchip	0	0	0	0	0
Failure to advise change of address	0	0	2		
TOTAL	281	219	134	103	61

Customer Service Requests

The number of Animal Control related service requests received remained similar to the 2022/23 year as shown in the following table:

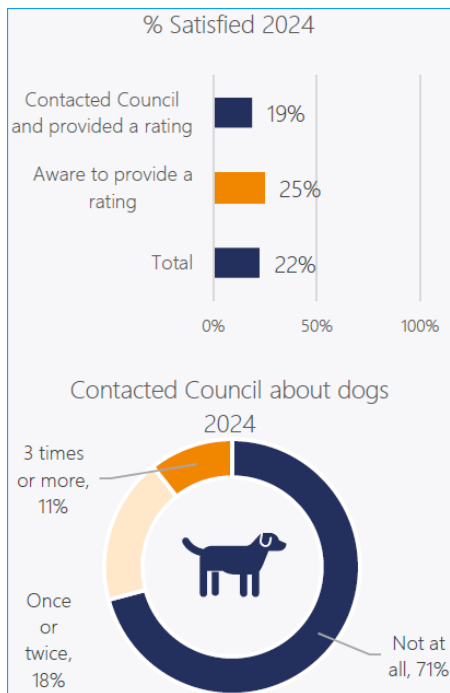
Service request type	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20
Dog Control	330	332	490	331	265

Satisfaction with Council’s Dog Control



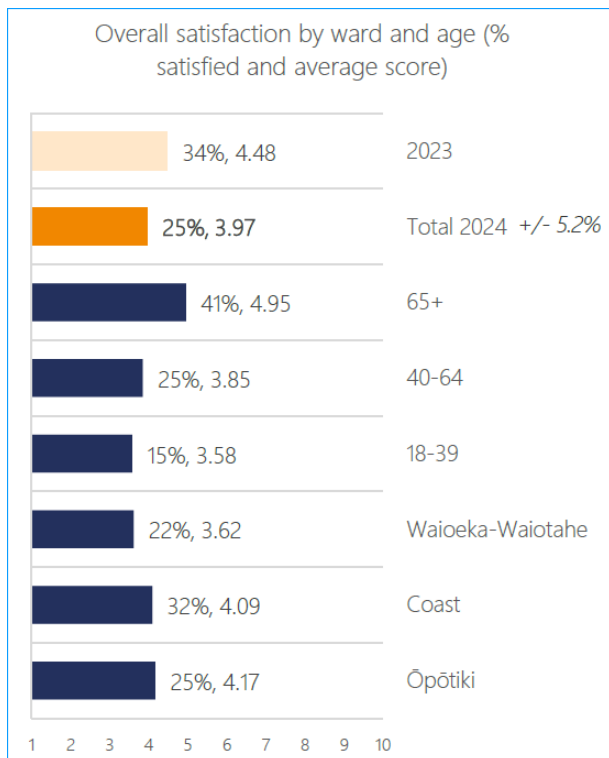
- In 2023/24, 22% of residents reported contacting the Council about dogs.
- 25% were satisfied with this service. This was a 9% decrease on the 2022/23 year but was on a par with the 2021/22 year. It was noted though that only a small proportion of residents indicated contacting the Council about dogs in the Ōpōtiki District Council 2023/24 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

Contacted Council about Dogs

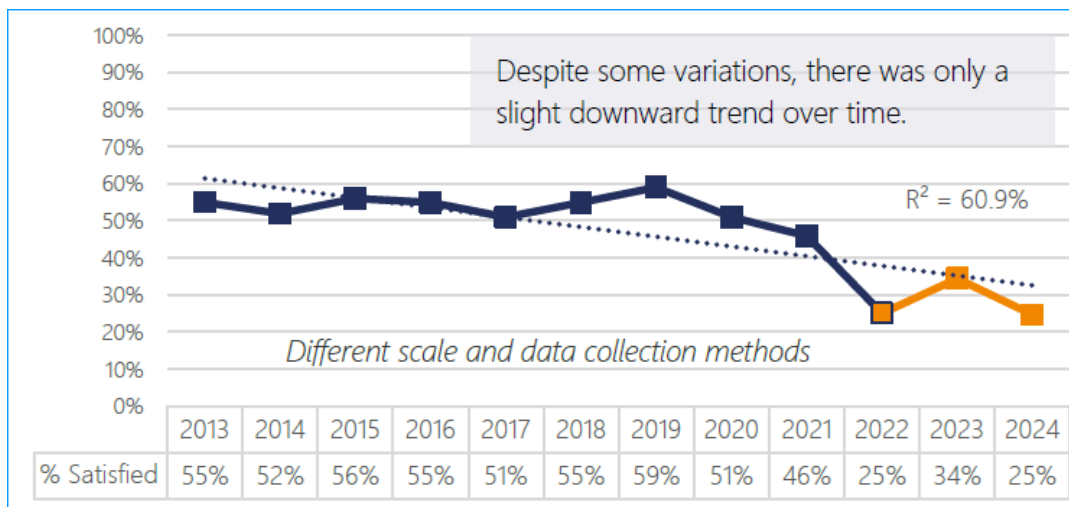


- 25% of respondents who provided a rating were satisfied with their experience or knowledge of dog control (on average, 4.0 out of 10). This result was down compared to 2023, but on par with 2022
- Waioeka-Waiotaha respondents, and respondents aged under 65, provided lower ratings compared to previous year.

Overall satisfaction by ward and age (%satisfied and average score)



Different scale and data collection methods



An important community priority for Council is a 'Community where people feel safe' and one of the ways we measure this is by having a target of responding to complaints of aggressive or threatening dogs within 2 hours from receipt of complaint. In our 2023/24 performance results we exceeded our target of 85% with 93% responded to within that timeframe. There were 55 complaints received and 51 responded to within 2 hours.

Our Animal Control team also continue to fully achieve our performance target of two patrols a day in the Ōpōtiki urban area, with more patrols as and where required.