



# ConsultationResponse

FROM THE RSPCA IN WALES

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## Consultation response: Caerphilly Council Public Spaces Protection Order Relating to Dog Control

### July 2017

RSPCA Cymru is responding to Caerphilly Council's PSPO consultation relating to dog control in the areas that are relevant to our work.

Following the informal consultation and the Health and Community Scrutiny Panel in 2016, where the RSPCA spoke against the inclusion within the draft order to exclude dogs from marked sports pitches owned by the council, we welcome that this part of the draft order has been removed from the new proposals.

**Question 1: The Council is proposing the continuation of the existing powers that make it an offence if a person in charge of a dog fails to clean up its faeces. Do you agree or disagree with this proposal?**

RSPCA Cymru understands that dog fouling is a major issue for towns and cities across Wales. Therefore, in order to increase responsible dog ownership and improve the relationship between dog owners and the wider community, the RSPCA agrees that it should be an offence for an owner not to clean up their dog's faeces.

**Question 2: The Council is proposing to introduce a new offence which would require dog walkers to carry an appropriate receptacle for dealing with the waste that their dog's produce. This would require dog walkers to carry a poop bag or other means for clearing up after their pet at all times. Do you agree or disagree with this proposal?**

As with question one, RSPCA Cymru believes that this will help to improve responsible dog ownership.

**Question 3: The council is proposing to continue existing power that make it an offence to allow dogs onto all enclosed children's play areas and multi use games areas within the County Borough. Do you agree or disagree with this proposal?**

The RSPCA understands the value of local authorities ensuring that sections of open space may be dog-free, such as children's play areas and purpose built multi-use games areas. It's important that as well as sufficient space for dog owners and their dogs, these separate needs are not unduly segregated which can foster misunderstandings and substitute problems. We wish to see integrated communities, with responsible pet and non-pet owners living harmoniously.

**Question 4: The Council is proposing a new offence for failing to put a dog on a lead when directed to do so by an authorised officer where the dog is considered to be out of control or causing alarm or distress or to prevent a nuisance. Do you agree or disagree with this proposal?**

To ensure that this condition is administered appropriately, RSPCA Cymru would like to see that the experience, knowledge and training of the officer imposing the condition is sufficient to ensure the

welfare of the dog is not compromised e.g. that they are able to signpost the owner to someone appropriate for further advice regarding their dog's behaviour.

Question 5: The Council is proposing the introduction of a new requirement for putting dogs on leads at all times in enclosed memorial gardens? Do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

This appears to be a measured response to a sensitive issue.

Please use the box below to make any additional comments you may have relating to the above proposals:

Many dogs enjoy interacting and playing with other people and animals, and it is important that they are able to express normal behaviour off the lead. Being walked off the lead and being able to meet, play and interact with new animals and people are important aspects of ensuring the welfare needs of dogs are met and that they are safe within a community. Being able to meet, play and interact appropriately and adequately is particularly important for puppies to be ensure they develop into well adjusted happy individuals. Where this is not allowed or done incorrectly problems can occur which include fear and aggression. RSPCA Cymru does recognise that not all dogs will be well-socialised and may find other animals or people threatening and where this is known then they should be encouraged to seek advice about their dog's behaviour and apply measures to ensure their dog doesn't pose concern to the community e.g remain on a lead but this should be done on a risk-based approach. It is therefore imperative that local authorities use PSPOs sparingly and in a manner that is proportionate to the problem, in accordance with guidance and not as a blanket power that punishes the responsible majority in an effort to tackle problems created by an irresponsible few.