

Public Spaces Protection Order (Dog Control) 2026

To:

Cllr Mike Todd-Jones Cabinet Member for Communities

Cabinet 23rd September 2026

Report by:

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Wards affected:

All Wards

Director Approval: Director Sam Scharf confirms that the report author has sought the advice of all appropriate colleagues and given due regard to that advice; that the equalities impacts and other implications of the recommended decisions have been assessed and accurately presented in the report; and that they are content for the report to be put to the Cabinet/Cabinet Member for decision.

1.	Recommendations
1.1	It is recommended for Cabinet to Approve the Public Space Protection Order (Dog Control) 2026 as set out in Appendix A, along with associated maps as set out in Appendix B. This includes the following recommendations: 1. the continuation of the requirement for a person in charge of a dog to remove dog faeces immediately within the areas covered by the Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) (Dog Control) 2026. 2. the provision enabling an authorised officer to require a person in charge of a dog to demonstrate that they have a suitable means to collect and dispose of dog faeces, subject to appropriate exemptions contained within the Order. 3. the provision enabling an authorised officer to require that the person in charge of dogs put them on a lead if the dogs are out of control or a threat to other people or animals. 4. the continuation of existing dogs on leads at all times in the following areas

- Cemeteries

- Newmarket Road Cemetery – the whole of the cemetery
- Histon Road Cemetery – the whole of the cemetery

- Cherry Hinton Hall – *area by pond / stream*

- Hanover and Princess Court – *the green area outside the residential areas*

- Tenby Close – *the whole of the park*

- Nightingale Rec - *Community Garden*

5. to retains the current seasonal dogs-on-leads control at Mill Road Cemetery

6. the continuation of the existing seasonal dogs-on-leads controls at the following Local Nature Reserves:

- Nine Wells LNR;
- Limekiln LNR
- East Pit LNR;
- West Pit LNR;
- Bramblefields LNR
- Barnwell East LNR;
- Barnwell West LNR;
- Paradise LNR;
- Logan's Meadow LNR.
- Mill Road Cemetery (whole site)

7. the introduction of seasonal dogs-on-leads controls at Byron's Pool Local Nature Reserve.

8. the introduction of seasonal dogs-on-leads controls at Church End, Local Nature Reserve.

	9. the introduction of seasonal dogs-on-leads controls at Fulbourn Road Local Nature Reserve. 10. the amendment to Schedule 2 that would prohibit dogs and their owners from entering fenced or enclosed recreational areas within Cambridge City Council public open spaces. 11. the existing limit of on the number of dogs that can be walked by a person at Byron's Pool LNR, Coldhams Common sports pitches and Hobson's park. 12. exclude the introduction of a seasonal dogs-on-leads control within Hobson's Park from the Order at this time and authorise officers to undertake further site-specific engagement and evidence review before returning a separate report and recommendation. 13. delegates authority to the relevant Director, in consultation with the Cabinet Member and the Council's Legal Services, to finalise and make the Dog Control PSPO and make any minor drafting, mapping or administrative amendments necessary to implement the above decisions.
2.	Purpose and reason for the report
2.1	The purpose of this report is to present the outcome of the public consultation on the proposed Public Spaces Protection Order (Dog Control) 2026 and to seek approval for the controls recommended by officers following consideration of the quantitative consultation results, written representations and operational and environmental considerations. The Council uses a Dog Control PSPO to address dog-related behaviour in public spaces where that behaviour has, or is likely to have, a detrimental effect on the quality of life of people using those spaces.

	The current arrangements include controls relating to dog fouling and dogs on leads, including seasonal restrictions intended to protect ecologically sensitive locations. The proposed 2026 PSPO provides an opportunity to review these controls and determine whether existing provisions should be retained, amended or extended. The recommendations in this report seek to achieve a proportionate balance between: • maintaining clean, safe and accessible public spaces; • promoting responsible dog ownership; • protecting wildlife and sensitive habitats; • protecting public health and amenity; • allowing appropriate opportunities for dog exercise and recreation; and • ensuring restrictions are clear, proportionate and capable of effective enforcement.
3.	Alternative options considered
3.1	The principal alternative would be not to introduce a replacement Dog Control PSPO when the existing arrangements expire. This option is not recommended. The consultation demonstrates significant public support for continuing controls on dog fouling and for a number of the existing and proposed dog-control measures. In particular, the requirement to clear up dog faeces received exceptionally high levels of public support. Of the 813 respondents who answered the question, 89.9% strongly agreed with the requirement and a further 5.5% selected 4 on the five-point agreement scale. Not having a PSPO would remove a clear and consistent mechanism for addressing specified dog-control behaviours in the public spaces covered by the Order. It could reduce the Council's ability to respond effectively to dog fouling and other identified behaviours and would not reflect the strong consultation support for retaining appropriate controls.

	The evidence following the introduction of the PSPO has demonstrated the value, with reduced complaints, service requests and the active management of the PSPO to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the public.																										
4.	Background and key issues																										
4.1	Prior to the current proposals, the Dog Control PSPO was made by the council in October 2017 and created offences of: • Failing to remove dog faeces immediately; • Not keeping a dog on a lead in designated areas; • Not putting, and keeping, a dog on a lead when directed to do so by an authorised officer; and • Permitting a dog to enter land from which dogs are excluded. PSPO would normally be valid for a period of 3 years. The PSPO was renewed in 2020 and the current PSPO was renewed in 2023 and expires on 18th October 2026. <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th><th>Number of service requests for all dog complaints (not stray dogs)</th><th>Number of complaints in the PSPO areas</th><th>Number of FPNs served for breach of PSPO</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2021-22</td><td>61</td><td>8</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr> <td>2022-23</td><td>55</td><td>6</td><td>0</td></tr> <tr> <td>2023-24</td><td>45</td><td>4</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr> <td>2024-25</td><td>32</td><td>3</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr> <td>2025-26</td><td>28</td><td>1</td><td>11</td></tr> </tbody> </table> The table indicates that the number of service requests across any form of dog control and those in the PSPO has reduced year on year which would be an indication that a			Year	Number of service requests for all dog complaints (not stray dogs)	Number of complaints in the PSPO areas	Number of FPNs served for breach of PSPO	2021-22	61	8	5	2022-23	55	6	0	2023-24	45	4	2	2024-25	32	3	5	2025-26	28	1	11
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PSPO is having the desired impact. The number of Fixed Penalty Notices served has gradually increase over the last 2 years due to the increase in proactive patrols by the public realm enforcement team on the open spaces.

The Council consulted on proposals for the Dog Control Public Spaces Protection Order 2026. The consultation covered a range of dog-control measures including dog fouling, requirements to carry a suitable means of clearing up dog faeces, dogs-on-leads requirements, seasonal restrictions and dog exclusion areas.

The consultation received 818 responses. The results demonstrate broad support for responsible dog-control measures, although the strength of support and the issues raised varied according to the type of restriction and location.

A recurring theme throughout the consultation was that restrictions need to be supported by clear communication, appropriate signage and visible and proportionate enforcement.

Dog fouling was one of the clearest areas of public consensus within the consultation.

Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the requirement that a person in charge of a dog must clear up after the dog immediately. 813 of the 818 respondents answered the question. Of those responding, 89.9% strongly agreed, with a further 5.5% selecting 4 on the five-point agreement scale.

There were also 354 written responses specifically addressing the dog-fouling requirement. The dominant view was that clearing up after a dog is a basic responsibility of dog ownership. A particularly frequent concern was that clearing up should include the proper disposal of filled dog-waste bags, rather than leaving bags on the ground, in bushes or verges, hanging them from trees, or disposing of them inappropriately.

Enforcement was a major theme. Respondents frequently stated that existing requirements are poorly enforced or perceived to be unenforced and that additional regulation would have limited effect without visible enforcement. Suggestions included more patrols, dog wardens or authorised officers, fixed penalty notices, higher fines and stronger action against repeat offenders.

	Respondents also identified practical measures which could support compliance, including additional dog-waste bins, appropriate positioning of bins at entrances, exits and popular walking routes, more frequent emptying, improved signage and, in some cases, free dog-waste bag dispensers. Public health and amenity were important considerations. Respondents highlighted the impact of dog faeces on pavements, parks, play areas and other public spaces and the particular impact on children and people using pushchairs and mobility aids. A smaller number of respondents suggested that enforcement should allow reasonable discretion in genuine circumstances, for example where a handler cannot locate faeces in long vegetation or where a dog is unwell. These respondents generally continued to support the principle of clearing up but favoured proportionate enforcement. Officers consider that the consultation provides strong evidence for continuing the dog-fouling requirement within the 2026 PSPO.
4.2	Means to collect and dispose of dog faeces The consultation also sought views on the proposed provision allowing authorised officers to require the person in charge of a dog to produce a suitable means to collect and dispose of dog faeces. This proposal received majority support. Of the 810 respondents answering the question, 67.6% strongly agreed and 10.3% selected 4 on the five-point agreement scale. However, written responses showed some concern about how this power would operate in practice. Some respondents regarded requiring people to demonstrate that they were carrying dog-waste bags as potentially heavy-handed and preferred enforcement activity to concentrate on actual incidents of fouling. Officers consider that the provision would support preventative enforcement and responsible dog ownership, but its use should be reasonable, proportionate and targeted.
4.3	Existing Seasonal Dogs-on-Leads Controls at Local Nature Reserves

The consultation sought views on the continuation of existing seasonal controls across designated Local Nature Reserves.

Overall, respondents demonstrated majority support for seasonal restrictions where they are linked to the protection of breeding birds, sensitive habitats and designated wildlife sites. Support for retention of existing seasonal restrictions reached 67.2% Agree/Strongly Agree, with 19.9% opposed and 10.4% neutral.

Officers consider that the existing restrictions have operated successfully throughout the current PSPO period and form an important component of ecological management across the Council's nature reserves. These sites form part of the core network identified through the Council's biodiversity work and the wider Cambridge Nature Network partnership.

Officers note that respondents generally recognised the distinction between designated nature reserves and more general public open spaces.

While concerns were raised regarding the cumulative reduction in opportunities for off-lead dog exercise across the city, officers consider that the existing restrictions remain proportionate because they:

- are seasonal rather than year-round;
- are targeted at specific breeding-season sensitivities;
- are established and understood by site users; and
- support biodiversity objectives within site management arrangements.

Officers consider that no substantive additional evidence has emerged from the consultation to justify removing the existing seasonal restrictions.

4.4

Proposed New Seasonal Dogs-on-Leads Controls – Byron's Pool LNR

The consultation results for Byron's Pool were:

- 57.5% support;
- 25.7% oppose; and
- 11.6% neutral.

4.5	Byron's Pool is a sensitive riverine woodland habitat supporting priority wildlife species and forms part of the city's network of designated Local Nature Reserves along the River Cam corridor. The consultation demonstrates majority support for introducing seasonal controls. Respondents supporting the proposal frequently cited wildlife protection and disturbance to breeding birds. Objections mainly concerned the loss of off-lead opportunities and requests for further ecological evidence. Proposed New Seasonal Dogs-on-Leads Controls – Church End, Cherry Hinton The consultation results were: • 57.4% support; • 21.7% oppose; and • 13.9% neutral. Officers consider Church End represents a logical extension of the seasonal protections operating across the city's nature reserve network. Consultation responses indicate broad public understanding of the need to protect breeding birds and sensitive habitats during breeding periods.
4.6	Proposed New Seasonal Dogs-on-Leads Controls – Fulbourn Road Open Space, Cherry Hinton The consultation results were: • 54.8% support; • 23.9% oppose; and • 12.3% neutral. Although support was slightly lower than at some designated LNRs, a clear majority supported seasonal restrictions. Officers consider the proposed restriction proportionate given the biodiversity value of the site and the limited seasonal duration of the control.
4.7	Proposed New Seasonal Dogs-on-Leads Controls – Hobson's Park – City Wildlife Site

4.9	Support for introducing seasonal restrictions at Hobson's Park was broadly consistent with that recorded at other proposed wildlife sites: • 57.3% support; • 23.1% oppose; and • 13.1% neutral. While officers remain satisfied that there is a publicly supported legitimate biodiversity rationale for additional seasonal controls at Hobson's Park, consultation responses demonstrated substantial concern regarding the evidence base, area options, communication and site-specific justification for the proposed restrictions. Given the unique level of interest generated by Hobson's Park compared with other proposed locations, officers consider it appropriate and proportionate to undertake additional engagement and evidence review before a final decision is taken. This approach allows the wider PSPO programme to proceed while ensuring any future decision regarding Hobson's Park is supported by the strongest possible evidence base and stakeholder engagement. Proposed New Seasonal Dogs-on-Leads Controls – Mill Road Cemetery – City Wildlife Site The consultation sought views on replacing the current seasonal restriction at Mill Road Cemetery with a permanent year-round dogs-on-leads requirement. The quantitative consultation results showed: • 61.1% support; • 27.3% oppose; and • 8.4% neutral. Mill Road Cemetery generated a particularly high volume of site-specific comments. Although the quantitative results demonstrate majority support for a permanent restriction, the written responses present a more nuanced position. Opposition focused on the loss of a valued local off-lead area, reduced dog-walker footfall and passive surveillance, and concerns regarding antisocial behaviour. Respondents opposing the proposal also highlighted the importance of the cemetery as
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4.10	one of relatively few accessible off-lead spaces serving the surrounding densely populated neighbourhood. Supporters generally considered that a cemetery should provide a respectful and contemplative environment and cited consistency with restrictions at other cemeteries, wildlife protection, concerns about loose dogs, dog fouling and dogs running across graves. Officers recognise the multiple functions of Mill Road Cemetery as a place of remembrance, a heritage asset, a City Wildlife Site and a local recreational resource. The existing seasonal dogs-on-leads restriction already provides protection during the most sensitive ecological period. On balance, officers consider that sufficient justification has not been demonstrated at this time to move from the current seasonal approach to a permanent year-round restriction. The Parish Committee which covers the 9 Parishes who own Mill Road Cemetery responded to say that 6 of the parishes were in favour of seasonal dogs on leads and 2 parishes supported dog on leads at all times. Over all there was support for retaining the current arrangement for the PSPO on having seasonal dogs on leads in Mill Road Cemetery Officer Recommendation Retain the current seasonal Dogs-on-Leads Order at Mill Road Cemetery and do not introduce a permanent year-round requirement at this time. The reasons for this recommendation are that: • existing seasonal restrictions continue to provide ecological protection; • the current arrangements are established and understood by site users; • significant concerns were raised regarding potential unintended community impacts; • further ecological monitoring can inform any future reconsideration; and retaining the current arrangement represents a proportionate balance between biodiversity management, public amenity and access.
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Dog exclusion Areas

The consultation sought feedback on retaining and amending dog exclusion areas within the proposed PSPO.

- 74.4% agree or strongly agree
- 13.3% oppose and
- 12% remain neutral

Respondents most commonly supported exclusion of dogs from children play areas paddling pools and certain sports facilities, describing these restrictions as proportionate and necessary to protect public safety, maintain cleanliness and reduce concerns about dog fouling. Enforcement was one of the most frequently raised issues. Many respondents felt that any exclusion areas would only be effective if supported by visible enforcement, clear signage, secure fencing and appropriate penalties for non-compliance.

Officer recommendation

Amend the provision that dogs shall be excluded from clearly defined enclosed recreational spaces intended for children, young people and organised sport, including but not limited to:

- Play areas and playgrounds;
- Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs);
- Tennis courts and padel courts;
- Artificial sports pitches; and
- Bowling greens.

This restriction shall apply to all existing Council-managed public open spaces containing such facilities and to any future Council-managed public open spaces adopted during the term of the PSPO where equivalent enclosed facilities are provided.

Maximum Number of dogs

The consultation sought feedback on retaining the maximum number of dogs that can be walked by one person. Overall, respondents were generally supportive of retaining a limit on the number of dogs that can be walked by one person in the designated locations. Across the three existing locations, approximately 67% to 71% of respondents agreed or

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4.12	strongly agreed with the current restrictions, while around 13% to 15% disagreed or strongly disagreed. The consultation indicates broad support for retaining restrictions on the number of dogs that may be walked by a single individual in designated locations. However, many respondents considered the current limit of four dogs to be too high and favoured a lower threshold. Feedback also highlighted a desire for any restrictions to focus on effective control and responsible ownership, alongside concerns about practical enforcement and the impact on professional dog walkers. Exemptions to the order Respondents were generally supporting of the proposed exemptions within the PSPO with • 65.7% agreeing or strongly agreeing with the proposed exemptions • 15.6% disagreed or strongly disagreed • 18.6 neutral. Many respondents supported exemptions to ensure accessibility for disabled people but felt that assistance dogs should still be under effective control and that dog fouling requirements should continue to apply wherever possible. Concerns were also raised about potential misuse of the term "assistance dog", with requests for clearer definitions and guidance. Additional comments focused primarily on the need for stronger enforcement including visible patrols, authorised officers, fixed penalty notices and consistent enforcement. Comments also focused on the better management of uncontrolled dogs and dog fouling, and clear communication of the restrictions. While many respondents supported tighter controls, others stressed the importance of maintaining sufficient opportunities for responsible dog owners to exercise their dogs, highlighting the need to balance public safety, wildlife protection and dog welfare.
5.	Consultation, engagement and communication
5.1	A public consultation was undertaken between 3 rd June to the 12 th July 2026 on the proposed Dog Control PSPO 2026. A total of 818 responses were received.

The consultation included quantitative questions on individual controls and locations together with opportunities for respondents to provide written comments.

The responses demonstrate particularly strong support for the immediate removal of dog faeces. They also demonstrate majority support for the principle of seasonal restrictions at environmentally sensitive sites, although concerns were raised about cumulative loss of off-lead space, enforcement, clarity of restrictions and the evidence supporting restrictions at individual locations.

Across the consultation, enforcement was one of the most frequently raised issues. Respondents repeatedly called for visible enforcement, appropriate penalties and clear signage. There is continued enforcement in the open spaces and the statistics show that the current PSO is working to reduce number of complaints received and proactive monitoring of the open spaces has seen an increase in the number of FPN being served

Dog fouling remained a significant concern in the general comments, including dog faeces on pavements, parks and sports grounds and filled bags being abandoned or hung from trees. Respondents also requested additional bins, replacement of removed bins and more frequent emptying.

The consultation also generated requests for additional dog-waste bins, replacement of removed bins, more frequent emptying and provision of dog-waste bags, however as dog waste can now be disposed of in any litter bin there is not a requirement for additional bins

Subject to approval, communications will be required before the new PSPO takes effect. This should include updated information on the Council's website, appropriate notices and signage at affected locations and clear information explaining where seasonal restrictions apply and the periods during which they operate.

Consultation responses and summary can be found as Appendix C

A response was also received from the Royal Kennel Club who supported promotion of responsible dog ownership including picking up after their dogs wherever they are.

	They also support dogs on leads where it is proportionate and evidence-based way including cemeteries. However, they do oppose a PSPO which introduces blanket restrictions on open spaces. The Kennel Club support Natural England's policy that restricts on public access should be the least restrictive possible. For example for bird nesting birds between 1 March and 31 July. The Royal Kennel Club response can be found as attached Appendix D
6.	Anticipated outcomes, benefits or impact
6.1	The proposed PSPO is intended to provide a clear and proportionate framework for responsible dog control across relevant public spaces. The anticipated outcomes include: • reduced incidence of dog fouling and abandoned dog-waste bags; • improved cleanliness and public amenity; • reduced public health and hygiene risks associated with dog faeces; • clearer expectations for dog owners and handlers; • improved ability for authorised officers to address non-compliance; • protection of breeding birds, wildlife and sensitive habitats during ecologically important periods; • clearer and more consistent seasonal controls; • continued access to appropriate opportunities for dog exercise; and • improved public understanding of where and when restrictions apply. The effectiveness of the PSPO can be monitored through complaints and service requests relating to dog fouling and dog control, enforcement activity, fixed penalty notices where applicable, site observations and relevant ecological monitoring.
7.	Implications

7.1	Relevant risks
	There is a risk that introducing or continuing controls without appropriate communication, signage and enforcement could reduce public confidence in the PSPO and result in inconsistent compliance. There is also a reputational risk if restrictions are perceived as disproportionate or as unnecessarily penalising responsible dog owners. Conversely, failure to maintain effective dog-control measures could result in complaints concerning dog fouling, public safety, amenity and wildlife disturbance. The recommendations seek to mitigate these risks by reflecting the consultation evidence and adopting proportionate restrictions according to the circumstances of individual sites.
	Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)
7.2	No specific Local Government Reorganisation implications have been identified at this stage. Any implications for future responsibility for enforcement or management of the PSPO arising from LGR should be kept under review as arrangements develop.
	Financial Implications
7.3	No significant financial implications have been identified.
	Legal Implications
7.4	A PSPO is a statutory mechanism available to local authorities under the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. In determining whether to make or renew the Order, the Council must be satisfied that the relevant statutory requirements are met and must have regard to the consultation undertaken, proportionality and any applicable rights and equalities considerations.

	The final wording, geographical extent, exemptions, enforcement provisions and commencement of the proposed Order should be reviewed and approved by Legal Services before the PSPO is made.
	Equalities and socio-economic Implications
7.5	An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and attached as an Appendix E
	Net Zero Carbon, Climate Change and Environmental implications
7.6	The proposed dog-control measures are not expected to have a material impact on operational carbon emissions. There are potential positive environmental benefits associated with reducing dog fouling and inappropriate disposal of dog-waste bags and with seasonal restrictions intended to reduce disturbance to breeding birds and sensitive habitats. The seasonal approach seeks to target controls to periods and locations where ecological protection is required while avoiding unnecessary year-round restrictions.
	Procurement Implications
7.7	No significant procurement implications have been identified.
	Community Safety Implications
7.8	Dog fouling and uncontrolled dogs can adversely affect people's perception and enjoyment of public spaces. The proposed PSPO provides authorised officers with a mechanism to address specified behaviours and should support cleaner and safer public spaces. Consultation responses also highlighted the role of regular users, including dog walkers, in providing passive surveillance of public spaces. This was particularly prominent in responses concerning Mill Road Cemetery and has been taken into

	account in the recommendation to retain the existing seasonal arrangement rather than introduce a permanent year-round dogs-on-leads restriction.
7.9	Seasonal dogs-on-leads controls form part of the management approach for sensitive wildlife sites and are intended to reduce disturbance during ecologically important periods. The recommendations retain existing seasonal controls at designated Local Nature Reserves and extend seasonal controls to additional sites where officers consider this proportionate. The approach seeks to balance biodiversity protection with recreational access and the need to retain reasonable opportunities for off-lead dog exercise.
8.	Background documents The following documents have been used in preparing this report in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985: • Dog Control Public Spaces Protection Order – Public Consultation 2026; • Consultation response and quantitative results; • Consultation written-response analysis; • Existing Dog Control Public Spaces Protection Order and associated schedules/maps; • Relevant site management and ecological information for affected Local Nature Reserves, City Wildlife Sites and open spaces.
9.	Appendices Appendix A – Proposed Dog Control Public Spaces Protection Order 2026 Appendix B – Plans showing areas subject to existing and proposed dog-control restrictions Appendix C – Dog Control PSPO 2026 Consultation Results and Consultation Summary Appendix D – Royal Kennel Club response to the Consultation

	Appendix E – EQIA To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact, Sarah Steggles Public Safety Team Manager. Email : Sarah.Steggles@cambridge.gov.uk