

NEWS

Rules for dog owners are agreed after complaints

A new set of district-wide rules for dog owners have been backed by Huntingdonshire District Council in a bid to clamp down on irresponsible behaviour.

Councillors on the licensing and protection committee met last Wednesday (September 20) to approve a new set of Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO) for the district, which formalise a set of powers for council officers.

One of the orders will give police and council officers the powers to stop dog walkers and ask to see the necessary equipment to pick up dog faeces, while the second order will require those in control of a dog to pick up and remove its faeces anywhere in the district.

The orders also give council officers the power to ask a dog owner to put their pet on a lead, and areas in which dogs are prohibited are also set down.

DANIEL MANSFIELD

daniel.mansfield@archant.co.uk

The decision comes following a public consultation exercise, in which respondents were “overwhelmingly in support” of the new orders, according to the council.

Councillor Barbara Boddington, a committee member, said: “Quite a lot of work has gone into these orders and I hope they will be enforced. I hope things will be in place to make sure action is taken if needed.”

Several dog interest groups, including the Kennel Club, were consulted about the orders and were said to be “anxious about some of the enforcement” and subsequent penalties. The council insisted the orders were no more onerous than existing regulations and that penalties would be properly and fairly enforced.

The new orders were introduced in response to concerns raised by Huntingdonshire residents, with 1,000 complaints having been made to the authority over the last two years about dog fouling, dogs off leads and dangerous dogs.

Officers described it as a “significant complaints issue” and said formalising existing control orders into a single public space protection order would help with clarity and enforcement of the rules.

Councillor John Davies, vice chairman of the committee, added: “Most people are happy with the proposals and I find it to be a very good set of proposals and well worth supporting.”

The PSPO comes into force in October and will remain in place for a three-year period, after which it will be re-examined by councillors.

For more information about the orders, log on to www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk.