

CONSULTATION ON THE INTRODUCTION OF A PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER FOR THE CONTROL OF DOGS

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW...

1. What is a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO)?

Under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, the Council can make a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) to control certain activities in a specified area if those activities are likely to have a detrimental effect on the quality of life of people in that area. This can include many forms of anti social behaviour, including problems often associated with dogs, for example, dog fouling. The Council is now consulting on the introduction of a PSPO across Rhondda Cynon Taf aimed at tackling dog fouling and introducing certain dog controls.

2. What controls would the proposed PSPO introduce?

The PSPO would introduce a number of prohibitions and requirements on dog owners. These are:

- The prohibition of dog fouling in all public places,
- A requirement that dogs are kept on leads in playgrounds and cemeteries owned/maintained by the Council,
- A requirement to carry bags or other suitable means for the disposal of dog faeces,
- A requirement allowing authorised officers to give a direction that a dog be put and kept on a lead if necessary, and
- A prohibition excluding dogs from all school grounds and marked sports pitches owned and maintained by the Council.

3. What controls already exist?

It is already an offence not to clean up after your dog. Failure to do so can result in a fixed penalty of £75. Under the Council's Bereavement Services rules, dogs are currently excluded from the Council's cemeteries.

4. Why are you considering introducing these measures?

Dog fouling is unpleasant, a nuisance and can be a hazard to health. The Council would like to introduce a PSPO to replace and extend the existing dog controls. This would give the Council and SW Police stronger powers and encourage responsible dog ownership. It would

also make Rhondda Cynon Taf a cleaner, healthier and safer place to live, play or visit.

5. How would the proposed PSPO be enforced?

An Authorised Officer would enforce the PSPO. An Authorised Officer is any authorised officer of the Council, a Police Officer or a Police Community Support Officer.

6. What are the penalties if the proposed PSPO is not followed?

An Authorised Officer would issue a fixed penalty of £100. Failure to pay the fixed penalty will lead to prosecution and a potential maximum fine of £1,000.

7. Where would the proposed PSPO apply?

The prohibition on dog fouling would make it an offence if a dog defecates on land to which the PSPO applies, and the person in charge of the dog fails to remove the faeces from the land immediately. This would include a requirement that the person in charge of the dog must have bags or other suitable means of removing the faeces with them. These requirements would apply to all public spaces across the County Borough.

The dogs on leads requirement would make it an offence if a person in charge of a dog fails to have the dog on a lead in all playgrounds and cemeteries owned/maintained by the Council.

The dogs on leads by direction requirement would make it an offence if a person in charge of a dog does not put the dog on a lead when asked to do so by an Authorised Officer. This requirement would apply to all public spaces across the County Borough.

The dog exclusions prohibition would make it an offence if a person in charge of a dog takes it onto land, or permits the dog to enter or remain on, any land to which this part of the PSPO applies. This would apply to all school grounds and marked sports pitches owned/maintained by the Council.

8. What do you mean by “public space”?

The definition of public space is wide and includes any public place to which the public or any section of the public has access, on payment or otherwise, as of right or by virtue of express or implied permission.

9. Why might I have to put my dog on a lead if an Authorised Officer tells me to?

Requiring dogs to be kept on leads will reduce the risk of dog fouling and ensures that dog walkers keep their dogs under control for public safety.

10. Why are you excluding dogs from school grounds and marked sports pitches owned/maintained by the Council?

The exclusion of dogs from school grounds and marked sports pitches is necessary to protect people and in particular children from the risks to health posed by dog fouling and ensure these are safe and welcoming areas for children and others to play and enjoy physical activity.

11. I use an assistance dog – would the proposed PSPO apply to me?

The proposed PSPO would not apply to a person registered as partially sighted, sight-impaired or blind, or to disabled persons who use a trained assistance dog, or to a person who has some other disability such that he/she cannot reasonably be expected to remove the faeces.

12. When would the PSPO come into effect?

The Council is consulting on these proposals. Before making the PSPO the Council will consider the responses to the consultation exercise. If the Council decides to go ahead with the PSPO, the implementation date will be publicised in advance of the powers coming into effect.

A copy of the proposed PSPO being consulted on is available on the Council's website.