

DECISION ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND HOUSING SERVICES	OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE	17 JANUARY 2023	7
PROFESSIONAL DOG WALKERS CODE OF CONDUCT			

PUBLIC ITEM

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

SUMMARY

The corporate plan includes the action to develop and promote a code of conduct scheme for professional dog walkers who walk multiple dogs at the same time. A code of conduct has been developed which professional dog walkers will be encouraged to adopt, this will be on a voluntary basis. The code of conduct has been based on best practice advocated by the British Kennel Club and scheme adopted elsewhere, it will improve both the welfare of the dogs in professional care as well as the health and safety for users of public realm. The Code of Conduct is free to sign up to and achieve accreditation from the council.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To recommend to the Operational Management Committee approval of a code of conduct for professional/multiples dog walkers.

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS DECISIONS

It is an action in the corporate plan to develop a code of conduct scheme for professional / multiple dog walkers.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

Economy – To create a vibrant and healthy economy	√
Environment – To deliver services customers expect	√
Efficiency – By spending money in the most efficient way	√
Tourism – To create a great place to live and visit	√

REPORT

BACKGROUND

1. It is an action in the corporate plan to develop a code of conduct scheme for professional / multiple dog walkers. Fylde Council recognises the importance and benefit to everyone of promoting responsible and considerate dog walking. Fylde has beaches, parks and open spaces that are popular with a range of users including dog walkers the council has a duty to ensure that public open spaces are welcoming and safe environments for everyone to use.

- Professional dog walkers provide a valuable service to busy working people, the elderly and the infirm; and there has been a rise in the number of businesses offering this service locally with the Fylde being a popular location for dog owners and dog walkers. Dog ownership has a significant impact on the local economy and contributes to the health and wellbeing of many residents. To provided support and advice for those who walk multiple dogs at the same time a Code of Conduct has been developed that is included as Appendix A to this report. This will act as a framework for best practice for paid dog walkers to protect the safety and welfare of the walker, the dogs in their care, and the public sharing the same public open space. The code of conduct has been based on best practice from the British Kennel Club and similar schemes operated in other local authorities.

ACCREDITED DOG WALKER SCHEME

- Professional dog walkers will be encouraged and supported to sign up to the scheme and adhere to the code, there will be no charge for this to the dog walker. They will be required to agree to the professional Dog Walkers Code of Conduct with a commitment to operate to the practices outlined in the code. This code will provide businesses with an awareness and understanding of what the council, the community and the customer expect from a professional service operating on public open spaces. Most professional dog walkers are aware of the best practice when walking multiple dogs, their commitment to the code will provide reassurance to owners who are seeking a dog walker for their pet. A register of businesses accredited to the Code of Conduct will be kept on file and held by the Environmental Health department. Potential customers will be able to check which businesses have made a commitment to the code.
- Registered businesses will be listed on the Fylde Council website. The scheme is open to everyone who regularly walk their dog(s) in Fylde professionally. From time-to-time, Fylde Council reserve the right to check compliance with this Code of Conduct. Registered businesses will be removed from the register if found to be breaching any of these requirements. Examples of compliance checks may be spot checks by Environmental Enforcement Officers whilst dogs are being walked, or by visiting the registered address should complaints me made. However, the council has many operatives in the local community every day who are aware of the roles and responsibilities across the authority as well as regular constructive feedback from stakeholders on activity on public open spaces.

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	None
Legal	No direct legal implications arising
Community Safety	Reducing anti social behaviour and improving animal welfare standards as well as public health and safety standards.
Human Rights and Equalities	No direct implications arising from this report
Sustainability and Environmental Impact	Creating clean, safe, and healthy communities is a key corporate objective for the council and this team and its responsiveness seeking to positively impact on the environment
Health & Safety and Risk Management	No direct implications arising.

LEAD AUTHOR	CONTACT DETAILS	DATE
Carolyn Bland	Carolyn.bland@fylde.gov.uk	14/12/2022

BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection
Corporate plan 2020-2024	03/09/2020	www.fylde.gov.uk

APPENDIX A

Professional Dog Walkers Code of Conduct

Introduction:

Fylde Council recognises the importance and benefit to everyone of promoting responsible and considerate dog walking. Anyone who visits Fylde knows that our area is blessed with amazing beaches, parks and open spaces and we want those places to be welcoming and safe environments for all, including dog walkers.

Professional dog walkers provide a valued service to busy working people, the elderly and the infirm; and there has been a rise in the number of businesses offering this service locally.

As such Fylde Council has produced this Code of Conduct. This will act as a framework for best practice for paid dog walkers to protect the safety and welfare of the walker, the dogs in their care, and the public.

For more information contact Environmental Enforcement team on 01253 658658 or enforcement@fylde.gov.uk

Code of Conduct:

	Health and safety:
	All dog walkers should be over the age of 16 unless accompanied by an adult, and should be appropriately trained in handling and walking dogs
	Ensure you have appropriate insurance for the activity you are undertaking
	Carry a first aid kit for dogs on all walks and have a basic knowledge of dog first aid

	Transporting dogs:
	If you need to transport dogs ensure vehicles are fitted out with appropriate cages or containment devices to secure the dogs, and also to avoid distracting the driver. Dogs should not be restrained by a lead within a vehicle
	Ensure the vehicle is well ventilated
	Ensure the vehicle is insured for business use
	Carry water and suitable receptacles for dogs to drink from
	Do not leave dogs alone for more than a few minutes; for example, when dropping off and picking up other dogs and keep the vehicle locked when unattended

	Preparation:
	Ensure all dogs are free of disease and or infections and contact the owners to ensure all worming and flea control measures are in place
	Observe dogs for any changes in character, signs of scratching, skin ailments or other signs of infection

	Take the time to get to know the dog before the walk and talk to the owners. Does the dog have any special requirements? Could it be aggressive to other dogs or people? Consider the age, health and fitness of the dogs when planning walks
	Ensure every dog walked by you wears a collar with the name and contact details of the owner on it. Whilst in your care they should also wear the contact information for your dog walking company
	Ensure all dogs are microchipped

	Walking dogs:
	You must comply with all Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO's) relating to dogs, which apply to anyone in charge of a dog in certain areas within Fylde. For more information on the PSPO's see here: Dogs on leads across Fylde – Fylde Council
	Dogs should not be walked in groups of more than 6 (or the maximum allowed under your insurance policy)
	If any dog shows signs of stress or unusual behaviour the walk should be terminated
	All dogs must be kept under control at all times. Avoid causing concern to members of the public. Avoid crowded areas and areas where children congregate. Be sensitive to the fact that not everyone likes dogs
	Keep dogs away from livestock and birds
	Clean up all dog fouling by dogs in your charge and dispose of it a dog waste bin or other appropriate bin. Ensure you carry enough dog fouling bags for your needs
	Dogs should not be walked off the lead without prior written permission from the owner

	Professionalism:
	Be courteous and professional at all times
	Ensure the needs and welfare of the dogs are considered over and above any commercial interest of the business
	Consider emergency veterinary treatment insurance in case a dog in your care becomes injured unless a prior agreement is made with the owner and forms part of the contract
	If you lose a dog in your care you must notify the owner and the local authority dog warden immediately by calling 01253 658658
	Have a plan of action in case of emergency
	You must not board any dog without the appropriate animal boarding licence
	Be aware of local relevant byelaws, Public Space Protection Orders and restrictions

Accredited Dog Walker Scheme:

Professional dog walkers can choose to register their business with us. To do so they must agree to this professional Dog Walkers Code of Conduct. This gives businesses the opportunity to understand the requirements for best practice when walking multiple dogs and reassurance to owners who are seeking a dog walker for their pet.

Registered businesses will be listed on the Fylde Council website.

The scheme is open to everyone who regularly walk their dog(s) in Fylde professionally.

From time-to-time, Fylde Council reserve the right to check compliance with this Code of Conduct. Registered businesses will be removed from the register if found to be breaching any of these requirements.

For more information contact Environmental Enforcement team on 01253 658658 or enforcement@fylde.gov.uk

Name	
Business Name	
Address	
Telephone Number	
Email address	

I would like to apply for to be added to the Fylde Council register of Professional Dog Walkers.

In doing so I agree to abide by the Professional Dog Walkers Code of Conduct.

Signed	
Print name	
Date	

Submit your application to Fylde Council – enforcement@fylde.gov.uk

Your registration form and associated documentation will be checked by an officer of the division.

The officer will contact you and may make an appointment to meet you in person.