

Title of Report:	Consideration of proposed Dog Control Order excluding dogs from lands – findings of Public Consultation
Committee Report Submitted To:	Environmental Services Committee
Date of Meeting:	16th February 2023
For Decision or For Information	For Decision

Linkage to Council Strategy (2021-25)	
Strategic Theme	Healthy and Engaged Communities
Outcome	Implementation of statutory requirements
Lead Officer	Head of Health & Built Environment

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	Advertising Costs Signage Enforcement
Included in Current Year Estimates	No
Capital/Revenue	N/A
Code	N/A
Staffing Costs	N/A

Screening Requirements	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	N/A	Date:
	EQIA Required and Completed:	N/A	Date:
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	N/A	Date:
	RNA Required and Completed:	N/A	Date:
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	N/A	Date:
	DPIA Required and Completed:	N/A	Date:

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is for members to consider the responses to a public consultation for a Dog Control Order which would exclude dogs from lands between Ballintoy Harbour and Whitepark Bay and to reach a decision on how to proceed.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 A request was received from a landowner seeking a Dog Control Order to be imposed on his lands where an asserted Right of Way footpath is located. The path runs from Ballintoy Harbour to Whitepark Bay. The lands in question are private lands where livestock are kept however the public use the pathway for recreation and for walking dogs.
- 2.2 The landowner claims that members of the public do not exercise proper control of their dogs by keeping them on a leash and as such the landowner has suffered loss due to dogs worrying the livestock.
- 2.3 The request is that Council impose a Dog Control Order to exclude dogs from this land.
- 2.4 Further to CM220630 Council decided to progress the procedure to introduce a Dog Control Order to exclude dogs from these lands.

3.0 Existing Legislative Provisions

- 3.1 Legislative provisions to control dogs on land where livestock is kept exist within the Dogs (NI) Order 1983. Regulation 25 of this Order requires anyone with a dog on land where livestock is kept to keep that dog under control by means of a leash. Any person who contravenes this regulation shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding £200.
- 3.2 Regulation 28 of the Dogs (NI) Order 1983 states that if a dog worries livestock, or attacks and injures any other animal owned by another person, the keeper of the dog and the person in charge of the dog shall be guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 3 (£1,000) on the standard scale.

4.0 Power to make Dog Control Orders

- 4.1 Under Part 5 Article 40 of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (NI) 2011 a district council may make an order providing for an offence or offences relating to the control of dogs in respect of any land in its district to which this Part applies. An order under this subsection shall be known as a “dog control order”.

4.2 Although the land in question here is private land used to keep livestock the power to make a Dog Control Order applies as it is land to which the public are entitled to access due to the asserted Right of Way path.

5.0 Considerations of imposing a Dog Control Order

5.1 The Department of the Environment (NI) produced guidance for District Councils to refer to when considering imposing Dog Control Orders called 'Guidance on Part 5 of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011' which can be found at <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/doe/guidance-dog-control-orders.pdf>

5.2 The following excerpts are from that guidance on general principles:

- Paragraph 1.3 District councils may make dog control orders, provided that they are satisfied that an order is justified, and they have followed the necessary procedures.
- Paragraph 1.5 However, enforcement of the legislation is just one tool that is available to district councils to deal with dogs. Councils should bear in mind that the introduction of a dog control order may not always be the most appropriate course of action and that education also has an important part to play in promoting responsible dog ownership.
- Paragraph 2.2 The council needs to balance the interests of those in charge of dogs against the interests of those affected by the activities of dogs, bearing in mind the need for people, in particular children, to have access to dog-free areas and areas where dogs are kept under strict control, and the need for those in charge of dogs to have access to areas where they can exercise their dogs without undue restrictions. A failure to give due consideration to these factors could make any subsequent dog control order vulnerable to challenge in the Courts.
- Paragraph 2.3 District councils should also consider how easy a dog control order would be to enforce, since failure to enforce properly could undermine the effect of an order. This is particularly the case for orders that exclude dogs completely from areas of land.

6.0 Procedures for making a Dog Control Order

6.1 The 'Guidance on Part 5 of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011' also sets out the procedures for making a dog control order. The following excerpts are from that guidance:

- Paragraph 2.5 The Procedures Regulations require that before it can make a dog control order, a district council must publish a notice describing the proposed order on the council's website and in a local newspaper circulating in the same area as the land to which the order would apply and invite representations on the proposal.

The notice must:

- (a) identify the land to which the order will apply;
 - (b) summarise the order;
 - (c) if the order will refer to a map, say where the map can be inspected. This must be at an address in the district council's area, be free of charge, and be available at all reasonable hours during the consultation period;
 - (d) state that representations about the proposal may be made to the council and give the date by which they must be made. The final date for representation must be at least 28 days after the publication of the notice.
- Paragraph 2.6 At the end of the consultation period the council must consider any representations that have been made. If it then decides to proceed with the order, it must decide when the order will come into force. This must be at least 14 days from the date on which it was made.
 - A Public Consultation was launched on 3rd January 2023 with a public notice being placed in the Coleraine Chronicle and the documentation was uploaded to the Council website. Copies of the documentation were also displayed in reception areas of the Council Offices at Sheksburn, Cloonavin, Riada House and Limavady (See Appendix 1).

7.0 Outcome of Further Monitoring and Assessment of Current Situation

7.1 Further recent monitoring was carried out by officers from the Enforcement team from 16th January 2023 to 30th January 2023. In order for an offence to be committed under Regulation 25 of the Dogs (NI) Order 1983 livestock must be present on the land in question and dogs must be off leash and not under control. In summary the findings are:

- Of the 10 visits livestock were present 8 times.
- Of the 10 visits dogs were noted 6 times when livestock was present.
- On one occasion an offence was detected when dogs were noted off leash when livestock were present. The dog owner was observed entering the area from Whitepark Bay with 2 retriever dogs off leash. When approached by the Environmental Warden and advised of the presence of livestock the owner leashed the dogs.

7.2 Monitoring by officers from the Enforcement Team was previously carried out on weekdays from 29th April 2022 to 27th May 2022. In total 10 monitoring visits were carried out at the lands in question.

- Of the 10 visits livestock was present once.
- Of the 10 visits dogs were observed not under control once.
- Of the 10 visits no offences were detected whereby livestock was present and dogs were off leash.

7.3 A monitoring exercise was also carried out by officers from the Enforcement Team and the Senior Environmental Health Officer for Enforcement during the week and at weekends from 31st January to 22nd February 2022. In summary the findings were:

- Of the 37 visits livestock was present 5 times
- Of the 37 visits dogs were observed not under control 6 times
- Of the 37 visits no offences were detected whereby livestock was present and dogs were off leash

7.4 An elected member visited the area on two occasions and reported the following:

- 14th April 2022 - 3 walkers with dogs off leads and livestock present. 1 dog observed making an attempt to chase but was restrained by the owner.
- 3rd May 2022 – No dog walkers observed.

7.5 Environmental Services engaged with the person who made the request for the Dog Control Order to provide a written witness statement indicating the extent of the problem in their experience and to provide supplementary evidence to support any losses incurred such as veterinary records.

7.6 The complainant provided a witness statement confirming their general complaint of the land being used by dog owners but there are no specific details of number of incidents of dogs attacking livestock, no details of numbers of livestock lost and no veterinary evidence of treatment of livestock following dog attacks.

8.0 Considerations for Council

- There already exists legislation whereby dogs must be under control by means of a leash on lands where livestock is present.
- The relevant guidance requires that the introduction of any Dog Control Order must be justified.
- Councils must take into account the interests of dog owners to be able to exercise their dogs without undue restrictions.
- Any proposed Dog Control Order must have a public consultation and the responses from this consultation such as objections to the Dog Control

Order must be considered however there is no duty to adopt the views of consultees.

- The introduction of any Dog Control Order is subject to legal challenge and may fail if Council cannot demonstrate that such an Order is required and justified.
- The Environmental Health Department have no recorded complaints of any incidents of dogs worrying livestock on these lands.
- From the total of 57 monitoring visits undertaken by the Enforcement Team and one relevant offence was detected.
- From 2 visits undertaken by an elected member, 3 dogs were observed off lead while livestock present.
- The witness statement by the complainant does not provide any supporting evidence in relation to the complaint.

9.0 Results of Public Consultation

A public consultation was launched on 3rd January 2023. A total of 151 responses were received with 147 letters of objection (Appendix 2) and 4 letters of support (Appendix 3).

10.0 Options

- 10.1 Option 1 - Council does not proceed with introduction of a Dog Control Order to exclude dogs from these lands and continues to rely on enforcement of existing legislative provisions under the Dogs (NI) Order 1983 which require dogs to be kept under control by means of a leash where livestock are present.
- 10.2 Option 2 – Progress with procedure to introduce an alternative Dog Control Order whereby dogs would not be excluded from the area but must be on a lead at all times whether livestock are present or not. This option would require the procedure detailed in paragraph 6.0 to be initiated including a further public consultation.
- 10.3 Option 3 – Proceed with the introducing new legislation in the form of a Dog Control Order to exclude dogs from lands between Ballintoy Harbour and Whitepark Bay.

11.0 Recommendation

It is recommended that members of the Environmental Services Committee make a recommendation to Council that Council does not introduce a Dog

Control Order excluding dogs from between Ballintoy Harbour and Whitepark Bay and relies on existing legislative provisions (Option 1).

Appendix 1

The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011

The Dog Control Orders (Prescribed Offences and Penalties, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 (S.R 2012 No 114)

The Dogs Exclusion (Lands at Ballintoy to Whitepark Bay) Order (2023)

Notice is hereby given that Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council in exercise of the powers conferred onto it by Article 40 of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 intends, not less than 28 days from the date of the notice, to make an order entitled The Dogs Exclusion (Lands at Ballintoy to Whitepark Bay) Order (2023) to the land described in the schedule below and shown edged red on the plan attached.

Offence: The Effect of the Order will be to make it an offence for a person in charge of a dog to take the dog onto, or permit a dog to enter or remain on, any land listed in the Schedule below. Any person committing a breach of the Order will be liable upon prosecution to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale. A fixed penalty may also be issued for this offence which is set at £80 (maximum).

Inspecting the Order: A copy of the proposed Dog Control Order and associated map may be inspected free of charge during normal opening hours at the following locations:

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council, Cloonavin, 66 Portstewart Road, Coleraine, BT52 1EY;

Sheskburn House, 7 Mary Street, Ballycastle, BT54 6QH;

Riada House, 14 Charles Street, Ballymoney, BT53 6TZ;

Limavady Office, 7 Connell Street, Limavady, BT49 0HA

Or online at www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk

Representations: If any person wishes to make a representation concerning this proposal, please submit any response to The Environmental Services Directorate, Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council, 66 Portstewart Road, Coleraine, BT51 1EY. Submissions may also be e-mailed to environmentalhealth@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk

or submitted online at www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk

All submissions must be received within 28 days of the publication of this notice.

Dated this

Mr. David Jackson

Chief Executive.

The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011

The Dog Control Orders (Prescribed Offences and Penalties, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 (S.R 2012 No 114)

The Dogs Exclusion (Ballintoy to Whitepark Bay) Order (2023)

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council makes the following Order –

Commencement

1. This Order comes into operation on XXXX

Application

2. This Order applies to the land specified in the Schedule.

Offence

3. (1) Any person in charge of a dog is guilty of an offence if, at any time, the person takes the dog onto, or permits the dog to enter or remain on, any land to which this Order applies unless-
 - (a) The person has a reasonable excuse for doing so; or
 - (b) The owner, occupier or other person or authority having control of the land has consented (generally or specifically) to the person doing so.

(2) Nothing in this Article applies to a person with a disability (within the meaning of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995) in respect of a dog kept or used by the person wholly or mainly for the purpose of assisting the person to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

(3) For the purposes of this article a person who habitually has a dog in their possession shall be taken to be in charge of the dog at any time unless at that time some other person is in charge of the dog.

Penalty

4. A person guilty of an offence under Article 3 is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale.

(Date)

(Attestation clause)

Schedule

Lands from the point at which Whitepark Bay meets Ballintoy Public Right of Way until the final gate leading to Ballintoy Harbour which is shown edged red on the plan attached.



 Dog Exclusion Order

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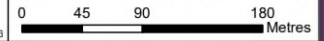


**Ballintoy Harbour to White Park Bay
Dog Exclusion Order (2023)**
 Source: Sarah McKenna, GIS Analyst

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Date: 14/12/2022 | Best Printed A4



Appendix 2 – Letters of Objection

Objection 1

Dear Sir/Madam

I note your request for comment on the dog control order Ballintoy to Whitepark Bay and would respond as follows.

Having walked this path a few times in the past as part of the Ulster Way route, with my dog, my I say always controlled and on a lead. I agree with the farmer that his animals must be protected from uncontrolled dogs attacking his livestock. But would ask is there no other alternate such as a fenced off route along the path for walkers to use, similar to that on other parts of the Way such as at dunluce etc.

It would be a pity for walkers with dogs to be excluded from this pleasant walk, due to an inconsiderate minority.

I'm not even sure how the council would patrol this area of pathway on a constant basis to prevent uncontrolled dogs being walked here, the cost would be prohibitive alone to have a person on duty 24/7, and that is what would be needed to control this.

Objection 2

We visit several times a year to visit family and often use this beautiful path.

We don't understand why you can't just advise dog owners to keep their dogs on a lead if there is livestock.

Compared to where we live in Yorkshire, Northern Ireland is already woefully behind when it comes to dog friendly attractions and cafes. This ban will also deter people from visiting which would be a great shame

Objection 3

This is a ridiculous idea to simply ban all dogs just because of a few irresponsible dog owners. Rather than enforcing no dogs along this area, why not enforce (not just this area but all over the borough) dog fouling, dogs off lead in areas it is not allowed and dogs attacking livestock, the proposal will require enforcement officers anyway, so why not just put officers on the ground now and enforce fines on current laws such as dog fouling rather than a ban all dogs. Another example of the majority being penalised because of a minority! The proposal is more suited to the council as a complete ban will likely bring more easier fines rather than actually dealing with the issue and fining the dog owners who simply do not care.

From a sensible dog owner who is already frustrated at the lack of enforcement of dog fouling and off lead dogs attacking my own dog on an almost daily basis!

Objection 4

Good morning,

I have just read that you are considering banning people taking their dogs on the coastal paths at Ballintoy.

My first question is what are you actually thinking even suggesting such a ban?

Secondly, I would ask why you are discriminating against our loyal family pets who mean the world to us? Like your family, our dogs are part of our family.

I wonder if you have actually considered the detrimental affect this will have on the area.

Do you know how much money pet owners bring to the areas? Have you even looked at the potential danger that you will be causing businesses with the loss of all the revenue that dog owners will spend on accommodation and eateries? Family pet holidays bring millions to the country so why are you happy to throw that all away?

I cannot actually believe, in 2023, when we are all fighting for equality, you would even consider this ban.

More damage is done to the environment by humans, than that of their pets.

I await in anticipation for your response on this matter and a clear clarification on your reasons for even considering this ban.

Objection 5

Good morning, .

I have just read that you are considering banning people taking their dogs on the coastal paths at Ballintoy.

My first question is what are you actually thinking even suggesting such a ban?

Secondly, I would ask why you are discriminating against our loyal family pets who mean the world to us? Like your family, our dogs are part of our family.

I wonder if you have actually considered the detrimental affect this will have on the area.

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I cannot actually believe, in 2023, when we are all fighting for equality, you would even consider this ban.

More damage is done to the environment by humans, than that of their pets.

I await in anticipation for your response on this matter and a clear clarification on your reasons for even considering this ban. Freeway (wheaten terrier)

Objection 6

To whom it may concern

We believe that responsible dog owners with dogs on leads should be permitted on the public pathway from Ballintoy to Whitepark Bay. Measures should be implemented to penalise dog walkers who do not ensure that their dog is kept under control. There should be a limit on the number of dogs that any one person keeps on a lead and all dog walkers should be required to remove dog waste in a responsible manner.

Dog walkers bring income to the County Antrim coast, people who walk dogs are maintaining their own and their dogs physical and mental health. Dog walkers need access to public walkways in the countryside and as rates payers we should have a right of access. Access to public walkways and the use of same by the public reduces obesity and promotes healthy lifestyle choices. Increasingly the NHS is promoting 'green prescribing and social prescribing', the introduction of this dog order is contrary to this type of prescribing, having access to a public walk way to walk your dog enables people to have a space to take exercise and meet like minded people which benefits their physical and mental health, and reduces the need for medical interventions and reduces the cost to the NHS.

Controls should be put in place for people who are dog walking multiple dogs on a commercial basis, ie. Limit the number of dogs one person can walk on a lead.

We visit County Antrim regularly for recreation with our dog and if such a dog order was put in place, we would be deterred from visiting this location and our money would not be spent in County Antrim.

Objection 7

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please pardon the pun but it would be barking mad to ban dog walkers from the proposed area. Northern Ireland has the highest percentage of dog owners in the UK, with more than a third of households owning a dog. Tourists and locals come to this area to walk on one of the most beautiful coastlines in the world, many of them will want to walk it with their dog. The tourist industry has had to adapt to a growing demand for people who wish to travel with their dog, so banning dogs sends a very negative and unwelcome message.

Dog walking helps us to connect to the great outdoors and keeps us fitter and healthier. For those of us who prefer a walk with our dog than strolling alone, please don't make this a no go area.

Objection 8

This should not be proceeded with and the recommendation by the Environmental Services sub-committee accepted.

Council Officers undertook 47 site visits and found no evidence to support a ban on dog walking in this area.

The right of way should not be infringed by draconian legislation which is not needed and will place additional costs on council with its enforcement responsibilities.

There is no justification or requirement to proceed to ban dogs, most likely to be tourists to your council area, from accessing this area.

I do not support a dog control order and would urge council to refuse to proceed with one.

Objection 9

Dear Chief Executive

Consultation: The Dogs Exclusion (Lands at Ballintoy to Whitepark Bay) Order (2023)

We

1. are Sheep farmers
2. provide tourist facilities & services
3. live close to Ballintoy and Whitepark Bay
4. are responsible dog walkers

This proposal is ill conceived, counter productive and wrong.

The stretch between Ballintoy and Whitepark Bay is key to tourism, regeneration, employment and the physical and mental wellbeing of many diverse stakeholders acting responsibly with their pets.

It is clear and obvious that the matter can be resolved by the construction of fencing along the route some hundred yards from the high water mark. What actions has Council taken to evaluate alternatives to this order? Has Council conducted an impact assessment? Why are we not being consulted on a range of alternative actions?

The Council's proposal is contrary to action being taken by NI Councils to open paths and greenways to residents and visitors and their dogs. It's all about providing dog friendly access to responsible owners.

As sheep farmers we are well aware of the risks to livestock. Yet, land within a hundred yards of the high water mark is of limited value to sheep farming. This particular path is key for tourism, health, economic and social wellbeing - not sheep.

It is evident to many that the threatening behaviour of one farmer is not representational of the farming community, the signage welcoming residents / visitors has been appalling. It is obvious that one farmer needs to give up rights in this small well established dog walking area for the benefit of the many.

We, sheep farmers, do not support this proposal. This is not about animal husbandry and safety. You will promote community tension and anger and resentment locally against responsible farmers.

This proposal reflects badly on reputation and creativity of the Causeway & Coast Council, Officers and Members. Can Council buy or vest this land? The Council needs to secure this national asset. Sheep can be grazed all over the borough, they don't need to be on or near this unique path.

Financially this is a difficult time for the Council, difficult decisions on income generation, parking and services. We understand this. It is also a difficult time for residents and businesses. Please support us by quickly withdrawing this proposal, by promoting the walk to responsible dog walkers and by constructing double fencing.

Objection 10

The wellbeing of livestock is essential, however the proposal to exclude dogs from the Ballintoy and Whitepark Bay area is a completely disproportionate approach.

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council appear intent on taking the easier (and cheaper!) option of punishing ALL dog owners, in lieu of proactively tackling any supposed "problem" dog owners.

In my 44 year experience of regularly visiting the Ballintoy and Whitepark Bay area, I have never witnessed a single incident between dogs, their owners and the cattle. I suspect the overwhelmingly majority of dog owners, who train and control their pets, enjoy the area without incident.

If the proposal were to be passed, responsible owners would furthermore not be able to enjoy these beautiful beaches. This action could potentially deter visitors and potential visitors to the area. This would ultimately financially impact surrounding small local businesses.

Objection 11

I am writing to ask you to reconsider your total ban on dogs from the path between Ballintoy and White Park Bay which is a popular area. As many people see their pet as one of the family they like to bring them along with them on day trips and holidays but if where are bans are imposed they will be put off from visiting.

All over the North Coast businesses have been built up around the dog friendly aspect of tourism but if dogs are banned from certain areas then people won't be as inclined to visit which ultimately impacts the economy of the area. We support these establishments ourselves by holidaying at home and putting our hard earned cash back into the local economy so it is important to us.

Please do not discriminate against responsible dog owners who would be prepared to work with a compromise.

Objection 12

To whom it may concern, I would like to object to The Dogs Exclusion (Lands at Ballintoy to Whitepark Bay) Order (2023) While I can understand the reasoning behind an order such as this, often due to inconsiderate dog handlers who allow their dogs to roam free and worry sheep/cows, I do not agree that a complete ban should be enforced as this punishes the many due to the actions of a few. Instead, I propose a dog-control order whereby all handlers must be in full control of their dogs by use of a lead no more than six feet in length with the potential for no-dogs-allowed during lambing season. This control (with the exception of the lambing season ban) is used in many places, Ballygally Beach during peak season and Carnfunnock Country Park to name a couple, and is widely respected by dog walkers even though there is minimal enforcement. This would be a fairer approach than an absolute ban and I hope this or a similar option will be considered

Objection 13

Dear Sir or Madam

I wish to express my views in objection to The Dogs Exclusion (Lands at Ballintoy to Whitepark Bay) Order (2023) being proposed by Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council(the Council)

I would wish to state that I am not in favour of or support of the proposed Order by the Council.

However I would support any reasonable measures the Council may take to address the compliance of dog owners and dog walkers to enter and use the lands at Ballintoy to Whitepark Bay (the Lands)

By all means require dog owners and dog walkers who wish to use the Lands to keep their pet or pets under control by use of a lead.

Identify with appropriate signage at the point of entry to the Lands of the requirement, clearly advising of the risks associated with and the impact of uncontrolled dogs within the Lands. Illustrate by use of appropriate images on the signage the impact of dog worrying on livestock. Demonstrate the impact to the landowners livelihood. Make them fully aware and clearly state that they will be subject to fine for not adhering to the requirement. Deploy Dog Wardens or other competent Council staff to monitor, caution and if appropriate issue a fixed penalty fine for the breach of the rules or codes on those individuals who clearly disregard and disrespect the use of the Lands.

Please do not penalise the vast majority of responsible dog owners and dog walkers who respect the rules and codes. Do not deny them the pleasure of spending time in what is a unique area of outstanding natural beauty. Do not deny them their ability to maintain health and in some cases their mental well being by the imposition of this proposed Order.

On a personal level I do use these lands and do not disregard the country code. My family and I have walked with a number of pet dogs in a controlled manner on this stretch of the coastline for over 30 years. It brings us happiness and joy to walk this coast line and that is, in part, because of the freedom to walk.

I am very aware of the landowners' current measures to restrict access to walkers and users of the Lands in recent years.

Forcing individuals or

participants onto the exceptionally busy Whitepark Road is in itself placing those individuals and participants in danger from traffic.

Should the Council

succeed and impose this proposed Order what alternative safe passage will the Council provide to individuals or groups of walkers without threat or risk to their safety and well being?

I request that you provide my views and opinions to the Directorate of Environmental Services. I request the Directorate of Environmental Services consider the consequences and damage of this proposal to local and wider tourism. The increased usage and footfall in this part of the Borough during the phases of the recent pandemic must surely have not gone unnoticed by the Council. Why deter or deny returning and new tourists to this area by imposing this proposed Order. The Council, Aldermen, Councillors, officials and staff should be encouraging social and economic sustainability to the area and not discouraging it.

I request that you consider my views and opinion and do not take this proposal forward to implementation.

Objection 14

The dog Exclusion Order is absolutely disgraceful. People see dogs as members for their family and what this order does is make people think twice about going anywhere near the North Coast for day trips or holidays as you are asking them to leave a member of their family at home.

Objection 15

Hi

We live on the Moycraig Road and walk our dogs on White Park Bay everyday, come rain or shine. 2 labradors.

We also regularly take them to Ballintoy, especially during the summer in the evenings when it tends to have got quieter. We sometimes park at the rope bridge and walk to Ballintoy with our dogs. We use the cafe at Ballintoy regularly during the season always having our dogs with us.

At times in the winter, it is only fellow dog walkers you see.

We are responsible dog owners, always clean up their poo and put on leads if the cows are about on white Park Bay, as we did when there were sheep at Ballintoy.

Since the notices have been put up at Ballintoy I have always kept my dogs on leads even if there have been no sheep about, unfortunately that often is not the case of others. Many people don't understand the risk to all livestock, especially pregnant ewes and lambs. So it is understandable farmers are unhappy.

However surely it's about ensuring especially during busy times it about dog wardens being present and being given the ability to fine anyone who does not abide by the rules when it clearly states dogs should be on leads.

Often it is the same when people Park everywhere at Ballintoy making the road dangerous both to pedestrian and other drivers, yet you rarely see a traffic warden. Yet there is no talk of banning cars.

I know as a local resident I would be extremely unhappy to be banned from the 2 closest places we walk our dogs, but I also believe it would affect the tourist industry, as many tourists bring their dogs on holiday as they are part of the family. We need to attract more tourists to the area not alienate a large percentage of them, as well as upset local people who use local facilities and businesses all year around by reducing where you can walk a dog.

My suggestion is better education and more signage, along with dog wardens being in these areas enforcing the rules.

I hope these comments will be taken on board.

Objection 16

I would like to propose against dogs being banned along these walks lots of people go out with their dogs along the walks and it's lovely to stop and chat with them

Objection 17

If there are problems with dog fouling in this area, perhaps adequate dog bins and signage may help. Issues with dogs off the lead? Again signage.

These issues are relevant to many areas in the Borough. To start a precedent in banning here could result in other unnecessary bans should future proposals come to Council.

To completely ban dogs in this area, gives off the impression Causeway Coast and Glens is an unfriendly place for dog owners. Many visitors to the area bring their dogs to enjoy the fabulous walks we have. Not a welcoming initiative for our tourist industry.

Visitors aside, for the locals I have yet to speak to someone who is in support of this ban.

Why punish the majority for the few offenders? There are issues all over the Borough with human littering, will we be banning people from certain areas next?

Objection 17

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to submit my absolute objection to banning walking dogs at Ballintoy. This ban is not what is required nor in any way beneficial. It could be seen as discriminatory against dog walkers as this will deprive them of an area to walk their dogs.

I totally object to this ban.

Objection 18

On behalf of myself and my family, I most strongly object to the draconian proposal to exclude dogs* from the stretch of land along the beautiful coast between Ballintoy and Whitepark Bay.

I regularly visit this area (but never without my faithful 4-legged friend) and indeed, probably my most memorable visit was the day we walked (my dog at my side) from Portballintrae to Ballintoy – which we could not do if this ridiculous proposal proceeded. (We love the beauty and tranquility of Ballintoy in particular, as it also invokes generational memories.)

I would also make the following brief points:-

- Dogs ARE family. This proposal is anti-family.
- Dogs cannot be left in cars on a hot day (whilst their owners enjoy a walk).
- It is frankly appalling that families and individuals with dogs would be penalised and prevented from enjoying this route whilst exercising themselves and their dogs.
- There is a long-standing right of way (that has included accompaniment of dogs) and restrictions now and in the future would ruin the appeal of the area and would be unfair to a large proportion of people.
- I certainly would stop visiting the area if such restrictions were imposed. WHY would I visit if I had to leave my dog behind?
- Why is it permissible under the proposal to allow dogs with people who have disabilities who need a dog for day to day activities, but not to allow other dogs? This is obviously to accommodate disabled people but shows that there is no reason why dogs which are kept under control cannot be there. I would even argue that this is in a way treating able-bodied

people whose lives would be much less enriching without the companionship of loyal and faithful pet dogs, less favourably.

- Mental health is a serious and important aspect of welfare and exercise is one of the most beneficial treatments. Who is to measure the benefit to my mental health of the companionship of my dog, let alone the enjoyment of exercise with my dog along this route when we visit friends in Ballintoy?
- I also object to the language of 'kept on a leash' – language should state 'kept under control'. Many dogs are very well trained and will walk obediently to heel and adopt a perfect recall without the need to be on a leash.
- I also find this approach to (sadly) be typical of Northern Ireland political mindsets with a 'no this and no that' attitude, instead of making things open and workable. There is also a much stronger 'anti-dog' culture in Northern Ireland than anywhere else in Western Europe that I have travelled. (You only have to see how other councils and areas positively promote dog-friendliness – they recognise the 'doggy pound' brings a lot of business.)
- Finally, it has been brought to my attention that allegedly two councillors are related to the landowner? If this is the case, I expect they will have taken advice on 'conflict of interest' and if so they have probably received advice that permits them to vote if they declare their interest and are happy they are not influenced by any existing relationship? If there is ANY relationship, I would call for any affected councillors to abstain from voting or any involvement in the process.

Finally, I just hope that the Council will waken up to the negative impact (publicity, physical and mental well-being, animal welfare and to the local economy) that such a proposal will have if passed on the lives of many people who visit and live in the area.

Objection 19

Dear To whom it may concern

I am writing to inform you that I am against the proposed Dog Control Order for the walk between Ballintoy and Whitepark Bay. It's a beautiful walk and I would like to be able to walk my dogs along it.

I am a responsible dog owner and would not walk my dogs off lead in an area that had livestock. I also lift my dog's poo and dispose of it in the correct manner.

I am a visitor to the area and a resident in Co.Antrim.

Objection 20

Re: Dogs exclusion Ballintoy I live locally and walk my dog here on a lead. Can you erect cameras and only penalise those who deserve it? My dog walking here has lasted 30 yrs now with no issues at all. Portrush, Portstrwart are already congested enough. Rules have changed in Portstewart to have dogs on lead. Everyone seems ok with that.

Objection 21

Dear Sir

I would like to object to this order, sufficient powers are available to the council already re dog worrying livestock under the dogs order which is a law open now to council. I believe it was a Police power previously but was decriminalised.

I believe this is a means to ban people from walking in this area which is a public right of way and was tried in the past, possibly by the same farmer and thankfully on that occasion was successful thwarted. It will punish all dog owners not just the ones who need dealt with by the law and in my opinion would be the council not taking its responsibilities seriously but using a draconian form of legislation to reduce its own responsibilities to deal with this using powers already available.

If the powers are insufficient then MLA's should be asked to change the law.

Also what is the evidence that animals are being worried by dogs from walkers using this area. This is a popular walk and should be encouraged, not discouraged.

Objection 22

If there's a public right of way. Why not fence a section of the land off for walkers and dog owners and also ban film crews from the Land who disturb more than sheep when they close it off for filming. The owner has the right to shoot any dogs worrying his sheep. I assume this has not happened because there has never been an incident. I also believe the same land owner has cattle on White Park Bay. They are much more dangerous to the public than dogs to his sheep. I suggest the cows be banned from White Park Bay or kept well away from the beach. I appreciate the rights of the land owner, else where along the coast between Bushmills to Ballintoy there are designated walking areas, that is the way forward.

Objection 23

I am very disappointed and totally against the proposed Dog Order for Ballintoy area. I have regularly walked that area with my dog and both have very much enjoyed the walk.

It is a popular walk for many dog owners and I have never seen any attacks by dogs on livestock. I fully appreciate that livestock attacks are very serious especially around lambing time.

Surely there is another way that Council can control this area without banning all dogs? Why should all dog owners be punished for the irresponsibility of one or two owners? Why are these reckless owners not being punished? Does the Council ever patrol this area if there is a problem?

I understand as well that farmers can take action against dogs if they are found to be attacking their animals. Why is there not more signage to advise dog walkers that such action can be taken?

I am aware that the consultation ends soon. Please advise me on the process of what happens next? Who decides if the dog order is implemented and what is the criteria for making that decision?

Objection 24

Dear person

Ref the banning of dogs from the paths on the north coast. I do understand that some dogs chase sheep etc but surely it would be just as easy to Police the fact that a dog is not on a lead as easily as being there at all.

This proposed law will affect tourism in the area. Cafe's pubs etc. Many people bring their dogs. As do I. Big signs....DOGS MUST BE ON A LEAD....surely would be worth a try.

It is a mistake to take dogs out of this area!!!

Objection 25

I wish to object to any withdrawal of right of way for dogs at Whitepark bay, as proposed and reported by media.

Contact me should you wish.

This right must NOT be removed.

Are the livestock suitably corralled and secured to ensure their safety?

Are humans safe from roaming beasts?

I suspect dogs are less the problem, more a land "owner"....

Objection 26

To whom it may concern,

I absolutely do not support this dog order being enforced by the council. I pay significant rates and want to be able to walk my mums dog in the area as we always have. We are responsible dog owners and she is always under control.

This will do nothing to deter irresponsible dog owners and unduly penalise those who are responsible.

Objection 27

Dear Sirs

I have concerns over your proposal to ban dogs from the above path. What is the justification for this ban exactly? Is this concern for safety or has some anti dog person managed to infiltrate the local government system.

People more and more take their dogs on holiday. Such a ban will have an impact on the numbers coming to this area and they will go where they are welcome and this will affect the income to the local area.

Perhaps you could explain your thinking on this matter please.

Objection 28

I highly object to the proposed Dog Control Order above.

I spend at least 2 weekends a month from March to October in Portrush camping with family and friends. On 95% of these occasions my pug is with me. I'm sure this is the same for many other families that holiday in the area.

If this order is passed, then I will not be able to bring my dog with me and therefore will seek alternative locations to stay. This will mean a loss in income to not only the camp sites but also to many of the local businesses we support when there.

If this order is to be enforced, then I assume the council will have to pay a warden to patrol the area. Perhaps a better use of this resource would be to enforce more fines for owners not picking up after their dogs, or dogs off lead.

Objection 29

Good afternoon I believe that a lot of local businesses will lose a huge amount of trade if this order goes ahead. I book accommodation regularly a few times a year in this area to visit the beach and local beauty spots with my dog and in turn spend money in local eateries and vendors whilst I am there. I am aware that a lot of other people also do the same. I am not sure how this can be enforced or considered because 1 land owner had made a complaint and after 45 visits to the site it was found there were no breaches. Could a warden be deployed to the area coming up to the busy season to determine if there are causes for concern and then if there is evidence of loose dogs causing danger then deal with those responsible but to punish 99% of dog owners for the 1% that are careless is a bit extreme. If dogs are to be excluded then what is next, horses, motorbikes, motor homes??

Objection 30

I have just learned about the proposed ban on walking dogs, even on the lead, on the Causeway Coastal Route at Ballintoy. This just does not make sense, and is unfair to locals, and bad for tourism. Please raise my objection to this decision to the appropriate people.

Objection 31

As a permanent resident and dog owner from Bushmills, the news of this proposed dog exclusion is deeply upsetting and disappointing. This area is a beautiful and quiet walk for responsible owners such as myself and it would be a great shame to be banned from here. It is no secret that the north coast has an extensive choice of walks, but to be excluded from them for having a canine companion is unfair and unnecessary. By excluding dogs from Ballintoy, surrounding areas will become more congested with local dog walkers; a problem that is already apparent in the summer months for us locals. I strongly feel this decision is incorrect and that canine lovers should be allowed to enjoy this area just as much as everyone else. I hope you please consider my objection to this proposed control order

Objection 32

Council have already carried out investigations into complaints by the land owner and found no evidence of sheep worrying. Council should not be using dog legislation to placate an aggrieved land owner, in a complaint that was found to have no substance. I would presume a significant percentage of persons crossing this land would be accompanied by a dog. By using a dog order, despite no evidence of ongoing sheep worrying, the land owner is being assisted by Council in reducing the number of people crossing his land. As the land owner would possibly like to prevent ALL access, this is the next best thing for him to reduce public access through restrictions on dogs. The land owner already has legal right to shoot on sight any dog worrying his sheep. If there is a problem, he already has this legal way to solve it. The land owner having an issue with "keeping an eye "on the sheep, is not an excuse for council to play fast and loose with Dog Legislation . As there is no evidence of ongoing sheep deaths, there is no justification whatsoever for council to use dog restrictions as some sort of a quid pro quo to keep the "goodwill" of the farmer. Legislation should not be used in this way

Objection 33

I wish to object to this proposed order banning dogs along area of coast from Whitepark Bay to Ballintoy as in effect it bans people, dog owners, from a public right of way including those who walk their dogs securely on a lead.

I enjoy all parts of the North Coast and am most upset that I would be prevented from enjoyment of this beautiful area because of those people who do not protect their pet nor humans and other animals by correctly restraining their dog, or having control over them when livestock owners are enjoying their right to have their livestock on a public right of way. I am unsure if there will be any restriction on the control of livestock on the public right of way?

I wonder if this could be settled by making it law that a dog is on a leash and under control of the owner(or person walking the dog) when livestock are on the public right of way. I assume that otherwise the livestock are behind suitable fencing in private land where I totally agree it is an offence to be there if not invited to be there by the owner.

I would be very grateful to be kept in touch with this debate.

Objection 34

Dear Sir or Madam

I wish to express my views in objection to The Dogs Exclusion (Lands at Ballintoy to Whitepark Bay) Order (2023) being proposed by Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council(the Council)

I would wish to state that I am not in favour of or support of the proposed Order by the Council.

However I would support any reasonable measures the Council may take to address the compliance of dog owners and dog walkers to enter and use the lands at Ballintoy to Whitepark Bay (the Lands)

By all means require dog owners and dog walkers who wish to use the Lands to keep their pet or pets under control by use of a lead.

Identify with appropriate signage at the point of entry to the Lands of the requirement, clearly advising of the risks associated with and the impact of uncontrolled dogs within the Lands. Illustrate by use of appropriate images on the signage the impact of dog worrying on livestock. Demonstrate the impact to the landowners livelihood. Make them fully aware and clearly state that they will be subject to fine for not adhering to the requirement. Deploy Dog Wardens or other competent Council staff to monitor, caution and if appropriate issue a fixed penalty fine for the breach of the rules or codes on those individuals who clearly disregard and disrespect the use of the Lands.

Please do not penalise the vast majority of responsible dog owners and dog walkers who respect the rules and codes. Do not deny them the pleasure of spending time in what is a unique area of outstanding natural beauty. Do not deny them their ability to maintain health and in some cases their mental well being by the imposition of this proposed Order.

On a personal level I do use these lands and do not disregard the country code. I have walked with a number of pet dogs in a controlled manner on this stretch of the coastline for over 40 years. I am very aware of the landowners' current measures to restrict access to walkers and users of the Lands in recent years.

I have in the past both as an individual and as a participant in organised charity walking groups been denied access across the lands whilst taking part in events in recent years.

Forcing individuals or

participants onto the exceptionally busy Whitepark Road is in itself placing those individuals and participants in danger from traffic.

Should the Council

succeed and impose this proposed Order what alternative safe passage will the Council provide to individuals or groups of walkers without threat or risk to their safety and well being?

I request that you provide my views and opinions to the Directorate of Environmental Services. I request the Directorate of Environmental Services consider the consequences and damage of this proposal to local and wider tourism. The increased usage and footfall in this part of the Borough during the phases of the recent pandemic must surely have not gone unnoticed by the Council. Why deter or deny returning and new tourists to this area by imposing this proposed Order. The Council, Aldermen, Councillors, officials and staff should be encouraging social and economic sustainability to the area and not discouraging it.

I request that you consider my views and opinion and do not take this proposal forward to implementation.

Objection 35

I disagree with the need for a dog control order to ban all dog access between Ballintoy & Whitepark Bay. From the study that was carried out, I believe that dog control wasn't an issue and therefore overkill. Therefore I believe it isn't required, yes all dog owners should be responsible of their dog and its surroundings, a notice to say all dogs must be on a lead or liable to a fine is acceptable in my eyes, but not a blanket ban on accessing the path.

If there is still the onus put on placing a ban on dogs even on leads, I would ask that any ban would be considered for the lambing season only.

Objection 36

To whom it may concern,

I am absolutely disgusted at the proposed dog bans along the coastline. I find it very backward thinking at a time when the UK as a whole is moving towards being more accessible for people with dogs.

Please reconsider this movement

Objection 37

I wholly oppose the proposed dog control order. I fully support the views of 'dog lovers NI' as quoted in Belfast Live on 4 Jan 2023 in an article entitled Council wants public views on beauty spot's proposed dog ban which carries £1,000 penalty

Objection 38

I would like to register both my objection & disgust at t complete ban on dogs along the coastal line at Ballintoy. Why punish a multitude of well behave animals because some stupid humans can't get their stuff together & lift their dog's mess.

Objection 39

Hello Causeway coast and glens council,

I have just heard of the proposed ban on dogs in the area from Ballintoy to Whitepark Bay, and I must say that it is quite shocking to hear. I myself have recently been up walking in the area, on the 2nd, from Ballintoy to Dunseverick, and witnessed multiple dogs along my walk. They were a mixture of on and off leads, and all of them were well trained and under control. It is strange to note that there have been no images or videos released by either the landowner, walkers or tourists showing these attacks or the sustained injuries, which is highly suspect considering the fact nearly everyone carries a smartphone capable of capturing such evidence. It should also be noted that while carrying out my walk, on the

2nd of January, there were dozens of shotgun blasts coming from the sand dunes and farmland at Whitepark Bay, which lasted for well over half an hour. I hope it would be investigated, or at least future occurrences are halted, due to the important habitat the area is for many plants and animals, not to mention the disturbance for those visiting. Thank you.

Objection 40

Hi

I am emailing to formally register my objection to the proposed dog control order (ban) for dogs entering public land in Ballintoy.

The investigation provided no evidence of any issues caused by dog walkers in the area and thus this proposed ban should not go ahead.

Objection 41

Dear Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council,

I oppose the proposed Ballintoy to Whitepark Bay Dog Ban.

Council itself has provided a compelling case against such a ban in the quotations from its own report set out below.

“Monitoring was undertaken during a period when there was potential for increased use by the public and their dogs in good weather.

Monitoring was carried out on weekdays from 29th April to 27th May 2022. In total 10 monitoring visits of monitoring was carried out at the lands in question. In order for an offence to be committed under Regulation 25 of the Dogs (NI) Order 1983 livestock must be present on the land in question and dogs must be off leash and not under control. In summary the findings are:

- Of the 10 visits NO offences were detected whereby livestock was present and dogs were off leash.

A previous monitoring exercise was carried out by officers from the Enforcement Team and the Senior Environmental Health Officer for Enforcement during the week and at weekends from 31st January to 22nd February 2022. In summary the findings were:

- Of the 37 visits NO offences were detected whereby livestock was present and dogs were off leash.

Environmental Services engaged with the person who made the request for the Dog Control Order to provide a written witness statement indicating the extent of the problem in their experience and to provide supplementary evidence to support any losses incurred such as veterinary records.

The complainant provided a witness statement confirming their general complaint of the land being used by dog owners but there are no specific details of number of incidents of dogs attacking livestock, no details of numbers of livestock lost and no veterinary evidence of treatment of livestock following dog attacks.

Considerations for Council

- There already exists legislation whereby dogs must be under control by means of a leash on lands where livestock is present.
- The relevant guidance requires that the introduction of any Dog Control Order must be justified.
- Councils must take into account the interests of dog owners to be able to exercise their dogs without undue restrictions.
- Any proposed Dog Control Order must have a public consultation and the responses from this consultation such as objections to the Dog Control Order must be considered.
- The introduction of any Dog Control Order is subject to legal challenge and may fail if Council cannot demonstrate that such an Order is required and justified.
- The Environmental Health Department have NO recorded complaints of any incidents of dogs worrying livestock on these lands.
- From the total of 47 monitoring visits undertaken by the Enforcement Team NO relevant offences were detected.
- The witness statement by the complainant does NOT provide any supporting evidence in relation to the complaint.

Recommendation

It is recommended that members of the Environmental Services Committee make a recommendation to Council that Council does not progress the procedure to introduce a Dog Control Order excluding dogs from these lands."

Minutes meeting Council 14 June 2022

In my opinion there is no justification for Council to make such a draconian order that will prevent dog owners enjoying this public right of way and beautiful coastline.

Objection 42

Dear Sirs

I would like to register my utter objections to these ludicrous proposals! This is part of the coastal walk me and my dog walk regularly and thoroughly enjoy. It always ends in a drink and a meal in the local bars or restaurants.

Objection 43

To whom it may concern,

"I oppose the Balintoy to Whitepark Bay Dog Ban .

Council itself has provided a compelling case against such a ban in the quotations from its own report set out below

"Monitoring was undertaken during a period when there was potential for increased use by the public and their dogs in good weather.

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The complainant provided a witness statement confirming their general complaint of the land being used by dog owners but there are no specific details of number of incidents of dogs attacking livestock, no details of numbers of livestock lost and no veterinary evidence of treatment of livestock following dog attacks.

Considerations for Council

- There already exists legislation whereby dogs must be under control by means of a leash on lands where livestock is present.
- The relevant guidance requires that the introduction of any Dog Control Order must be justified.
- Councils must take into account the interests of dog owners to be able to exercise their dogs without undue restrictions.
- Any proposed Dog Control Order must have a public consultation and the responses from this consultation such as objections to the Dog Control Order must be considered.
- The introduction of any Dog Control Order is subject to legal challenge and may fail if Council

cannot demonstrate that such an Order is required and justified.

- The Environmental Health Department have NO recorded complaints of any incidents of dogs worrying livestock on these lands.

- From the total of 47 monitoring visits undertaken by the Enforcement Team NO relevant offences were detected.

- The witness statement by the complainant does NOT provide any supporting evidence in relation to the complaint.

Recommendation

It is recommended that members of the Environmental Services Committee make a recommendation to Council that Council does not progress the procedure to introduce a Dog Control Order excluding dogs from these lands."

Minutes meeting Council 14 June 2022"

Given the above details I do not see any reasonable excuse to ban dogs on the path,

Objection 44

Dear Sir/Madan

We are a group representing Dog Lovers in NI

We have almost 50,000 followers on Facebook

Please register that Dog lovers NI are opposed to the dog ban .

We have consulted with our lawyers and are satisfied that the grounds for the proposed Dog Control Order do not meet the criteria set out in the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (NI) 2011.

We believe the most compelling arguments against the ban were provided by Council officers on repeated occasions at meetings of Council and we produce extracts below

"Monitoring was undertaken during a period when there was potential for increased use by the public and their dogs in good weather.

Monitoring was carried out on weekdays from 29th April to 27th May 2022. In total 10 monitoring visits of monitoring was carried out at the lands in question. In order for an offence to be committed under Regulation 25 of the Dogs (NI) Order 1983 livestock must be present on the land in question and dogs must be off leash and not under control. In summary the findings are:

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Environmental Services engaged with the person who made the request for the Dog Control Order to provide a written witness statement indicating the extent of the problem in their experience and to provide supplementary evidence to support any losses incurred such as veterinary records.

The complainant provided a witness statement confirming their general complaint of the land being used by dog owners but there are no specific details of number of incidents of dogs attacking livestock, no details of numbers of livestock lost and no veterinary evidence of treatment of livestock following dog attacks.

Considerations for Council

- There already exists legislation whereby dogs must be under control by means of a leash on lands where livestock is present.

- The relevant guidance requires that the introduction of any Dog Control Order must be justified.

- Councils must take into account the interests of dog owners to be able to exercise their dogs without undue restrictions.

- Any proposed Dog Control Order must have a public consultation and the responses from this consultation such as objections to the Dog Control Order must be considered.

- The introduction of any Dog Control Order is subject to legal challenge and may fail if Council cannot demonstrate that such an Order is required and justified.

- The Environmental Health Department have NO recorded complaints of any incidents of dogs worrying livestock on these lands.

- From the total of 47 monitoring visits undertaken by the Enforcement Team NO relevant offences were detected.

- The witness statement by the complainant does NOT provide any supporting evidence in relation to the complaint.

Recommendation

It is recommended that members of the Environmental Services Committee make a recommendation to Council that Council does not progress the procedure to introduce a Dog Control Order excluding dogs from these lands."

Extracts from Minutes Council 14 June 2022

We confirm that use will be made of this correspondence to seek costs in respect of judicial review proceedings which may be necessitated if a Dog Control Order in the form proposed, and on the basis of evidence produced to date, is made .

Dog Lovers NI

Objection 45

Dear Sir,

I am a regular visitor to the North Coast and will be towing my caravan up there again as soon as it gets a bit warmer! I fully understand the need to protect livestock belonging to farmers and the National Trust from attacks by uncontrolled dogs, but surely this could be done without a total ban? Neither I nor my dog are currently able to negotiate the stiles on that beautiful walk, as we are both ageing, but would hate to see others banned. You would not, I am sure, wish people to leave their dogs in their cars while they enjoy the walk. Could there not be an enforced ban of dogs not on leads? My dog is actually more scared of the sheep than they are of her, but I fully recognise that that is not the case with all dogs.

I do hope that you will be able to solve this problem without a total ban

Objection 46

I oppose the Balintoy to Whitepark Bay Dog Ban .

Council itself has provided a compelling case against such a ban in the quotations from its own report set out below

“Monitoring was undertaken during a period when there was potential for increased use by the public and their dogs in good weather.

Monitoring was carried out on weekdays from 29th April to 27th May 2022. In total 10 monitoring visits of monitoring was carried out at the lands in question. In order for an offence to be committed under Regulation 25 of the Dogs (NI) Order 1983 livestock must be present on the land in question and dogs must be off leash and not under control. In summary the findings are:

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Considerations for Council

- There already exists legislation whereby dogs must be under control by means of a leash on lands where livestock is present.

- The relevant guidance requires that the introduction of any Dog Control Order must be justified.
- Councils must take into account the interests of dog owners to be able to exercise their dogs without undue restrictions.
- Any proposed Dog Control Order must have a public consultation and the responses from this consultation such as objections to the Dog Control Order must be considered.
- The introduction of any Dog Control Order is subject to legal challenge and may fail if Council cannot demonstrate that such an Order is required and justified.
- The Environmental Health Department have NO recorded complaints of any incidents of dogs worrying livestock on these lands.
- From the total of 47 monitoring visits undertaken by the Enforcement Team NO relevant offences were detected.
- The witness statement by the complainant does NOT provide any supporting evidence in relation to the complaint.

Recommendation

It is recommended that members of the Environmental Services Committee make a recommendation to Council that Council does not progress the procedure to introduce a Dog Control Order excluding dogs from these lands.”

Minutes meeting Council 22 June 2022

Objection 47

To whom it may I wish to strongly condemn the banning of dogs in this area.

This is a fabulous tourist area with families visiting from far and near with their much loved dogs and will no longer be able to visit here. We are so backward in our country with not allowing dogs unlike European countries it's so far behind the times and will effect the tourist trade also. Please rethink this for the sake of 1. Families 2. Locals who walk their dogs here 3. The tourists who would be visiting here.

Objection 48

My family have been regular visitors to Ballintoy for over 90 years and have owned property at Harbour Road, Ballintoy for the last 70 years. As residents and rate payers, I am writing to express my opposition in the strongest terms to the appalling decision by Council to give consideration for the introduction of the above Order. Dogs have always been a part of my family and over the best part of the last century have accompanied 4 generations of my family on walks across the land which is the subject of this proposed legislation, without issue or incident. Firstly, I wish to make clear that I have no objection to the right of any landowner to ensure the protection of his or her livestock from animals which are not under the control of their owners. This being said, I do not consider that the steps proposed by Council under this proposed Order are justified or proportionate in the circumstances. Rather, in my opinion, they are draconian and represent a gross over-reaction. I wish to make the following points for consideration by Council:

- There is a long-standing public right of way across the lands in question.
- Ballintoy, in addition to much of the magnificent Causeway Coast is in an area of outstanding natural beauty. This Council area relies upon visitors / tourism for the success of the region and many of the businesses in it.
 - Many efforts have been made by groups, including dog lovers and Councils across the Province over a number of years to increase the number of public places and private businesses (including shops, pubs, eateries etc) which are 'dog-friendly'.
 - Dogs are family - banning dogs (even whilst on a lead) to enjoy the scenic views and flora/fauna of this wonderful area of coastline is an archaic approach. How does Council expect to encourage visitors to the area yet deny access to their pets?
 - Council, I understand, is obligated to take into account the interests of the general public, to be able to exercise their dogs without undue restrictions.
 - Existing legislation is already in place to require dogs to be under control (i.e. on leash) when on lands where livestock is present.
 - The vast majority of dog owners are responsible and would not even consider letting their pet be 'off-lead' adjacent to livestock, as much to prevent potential injury to their dog as to prevent any potential for livestock to become startled or frightened.
 - That there may be a very few dog owners who do not comply, does not constitute a reason to penalise all dog owners. (Think dog fouling - there is still an issue with this problem, caused by 'the few' but dogs are not banned. Penalise the perpetrators through fixed penalty notice or court appearance.)
 - I understand that following the complaint(s) by the land-owner in question, Council instigated a series of monitoring visits over a period of two months by an Enforcement Team (31 January to 22 February 2022 [37 visits] and 29 April to 27 May 2022 [10 visits]) during which, NO relevant offences were detected.
 - An (un-named) Council member visited the area on two occasions noting 3 dog walkers on one of the visits where their dogs were 'off-lead' whilst livestock was present, again, without incident.
 - The land-owner, following a request by Environmental Services, has, I understand, provided a witness statement in support of their complaint, however has failed to provide any details of the number of incidents alleged to have occurred where dogs have attacked livestock; has not provided any details of the number of livestock injured or lost; and has provided no veterinary evidence of treatment of livestock. In short, there is no supporting evidence to the complaint(s) raised.
 - Council's own Environmental Services Committee, at its meeting of 14 June 2022, were recommended by its own experts (based on the evidence from monitoring and, presumably, lack of evidence from the complainant) not to progress with the plan to introduce a Dog Control Order, excluding dogs from these lands. As will be clear from the points I have made above, I oppose the proposal to proceed with this Order in the strongest terms and trust that common sense in the Public interest will prevail. There are however a number of other areas which this matter raises and on which I would welcome a written response from Council:

- In light of the strong recommendation which Council received not to proceed with this Order, given the lack of supporting evidence, why did Council consider it to be an appropriate use of Public funds to proceed with this consultation?
- Why was signage, erected by the land-owner at the pedestrian style (adjacent to 'Roark's Cottage' corner), which stated 'Dogs beyond this point will be shot' not removed by Council? Whilst private land, language of this nature at the 'entrance' to land with a long-established public right of way (coupled with no Order being in place banning dogs from the land), is most certainly threatening and inappropriate in any public place, let alone a busy location at one of NI's most well known AONB's. Its presence hardly represents a 'welcome' to any visitors to the area.
- It is my understanding that two of the Councillors who voted in support of the proposal to proceed with this Order (including one who seconded the motion) have a family relationship to the complainant / land-owner. Was such a conflict of interest declared to Council? In summary, I would consider it to be more appropriate, if Council were to direct its efforts and use of Public funds towards the following matters of direct benefit to the General Public and visitors as a whole, rather than pursuing an ill-judged vendetta against the vast majority of law abiding dog owners, which the evidence available clearly does not support. These include:
 - enforcing existing legislation to penalise those visitors to the area who breach dog-fouling and littering laws, thus ensuring the beauty of Ballintoy and surrounding areas is preserved;
 - properly addressing once and for all, the traffic congestion and illegal parking issues at Ballintoy Harbour along with partner agencies (including preventing coaches, minibuses, motor homes and business operators accessing the Harbour) before a serious medical emergency arises;
 - dealing with the issue of the continuing discharge of raw sewage from the public toilets directly into the sea behind the 'Blue Pool' (in contravention of European Legislation); an issue which Council has been aware of for many years but has so far failed to address. I very much hope that Council will make the correct decision on this matter and I look forward to Council's written response on the areas I have raised in this letter.

Objection 49

As a responsible dog owner I cant help but be disgusted by the possible ban to dogs on public scenic walks.

This will cause a chain reaction if your brains can think that far ahead!!!

A family unable to go out for the day is restricted by their pet while the pet could and should be with them. So for less responsible owners that means.....

Pets in hot/cold cars = cruelty to animals needing veterinary assistance that could be unavailable on bank holidays and unaffordable resulting in pet suffering.

But, if you dont care about pets well being how about the public calling police about a dog in a carhow much does it cost for the call out? Is it more or less than a sign saying dogs on leads and photo evidence of a dog fouling and not cleaned up can be sent to this number for a fine to be posted.

Or leaving a dog at home and make no family memories and teaching kids that pets dont count. Maybe the dog will annoy neighbours and police or dog warden is called. Is that more or less than a sign saying all dogs on leads and member of public video footage can be used to be fined.

Maybe the dog who is used to going out with family for years suddenly isnt...it might wreck something or mess up the house and need vet treatment that is usually unaffordable out of hours (I worked in emergency vets) this pet could just will inevitably be abandoned.....or left st shelter as rules for rented accommodation is strict for damage too.

So what about the families who would have gone out all day and visited sites with their pet. A pet friendly restaurant and a ice cream later etc able to stay out from early to bedtime....

Now their kids cant enjoy these very important quality days with family and understanding the importance of caring for pets.....and the local shops and cafes restaurants etc will miss out because it's not possible to leave a dog alone for more than 3'-4hours without some issues at home when you get back.

The lesson for children of abandoned pets is that it's ok to not keep a pet for its life.

The lesson for children will also be a pet is not important enough to be a part of family time and making memories.

Have you even considered this????

What kind if people are you?????

Humans cause alot more problems on scenic routes with litter cigarettes signs of drugs bottles..... you gona ban them too?

I understand dog poo is an issue but it's mainly dogs off lead from my experience and owner does not go over to pick it up. If the dog is on lead there is no excuse. Public video footage can help with fines. Or a Qr code with pets microchip on entering senic sites....there you go some options that took me 5 mins to think off and cost less than

Abandoned dogs

Police and warden call outs

Loss of earnings in tourism

What qualifications do you lot have to have those high paid jobs I'd do much better on half of it.

An absolutely fed up practically minded member of public who sorted the forward thinking and issue cheaper and in 5 mins

Objection 50

As a Council ratepayer, I am grateful for the opportunity to be consulted on the following matter.

I wish to register my opposition to the Dog Control Order proposed for the section of the Causeway Coastal Path between Ballintoy and Whitepark Bay in the strongest possible terms.

As someone who regularly walks sections of the Coastal Path, I believe such a drastic measure would radically impact me and other responsible dog owners. I believe that the vast majority of dog owners

do behave very responsibly when passing through those sections of the path where farm animals are kept. My own dogs are always kept on a lead and under close control.

I would have no difficulty with an order which required dogs to be on a lead through the nominated area, but to exclude dogs completely is a ridiculous overreaction. Many of those who do walk the path, do so in the company of a dog and this order, if implemented, will exclude not just the animals but those who walk with them and spend money in the businesses along the route.

At a time when the Council should be doing everything possible to encourage people to come to the area and support local businesses, this measure would be driving a significant section of the population away from the area.

I urge you to think again and not implement this foolish proposal. Thank you for taking the time to read my comments.

Objection 51

I am a resident and rate payer of Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council. I am also a responsible dog owner. I was very disappointed to read that council plans to ban dogs from the area at Ballintoy. We love to take our dog on walks at the coast all year. One of the benefits of family life in this borough.

Please reconsider this vote and the residents, families and visitors who may decide to go elsewhere (as dogs are part of our family).

Objection 52

Sir/Madam as a responsible frequent visitor to the causeway coast I wish to object in the strongest possible terms to the proposed banning of dogs walking between Ballintoy to Whitepark bay beach. I have without fail encountered dog walkers along this stretch of coast on every visit and have never witnessed any form of dog misbehaviour be it in the area where sheep were grazing or along the beach where cattle were lying in the sand.

I note that no evidence of any kind, photographic or video clips have been produced by the concerned party, that of dogs worrying livestock be it in the first instance or in the aftermath of any such attack. Why would this be? Surely in this high tech digital age of media streaming someone at some time would have been able to pull out a phone and click?

I don't know the motive behind this proposed ban, only the complaint could answer that but I do believe it is not factually supported by any evidence and as such should be withdrawn.

Many thanks for your time,

Objection 53

I write regarding the Public Consultation on the proposal to the introduction of the above Order.

My family own a property on Harbour Road, Ballintoy and I have been a regular visitor to the area for over 50 years.

I object in the strongest terms to the Dog Control Order proposal for the following reasons:

- There is no valid supporting evidence to proceed
- Responsible dog-owners are being unfairly penalised
- This is a Public Right of Way which will discriminate locals and visitors
- Wholly inappropriate use of language on signage
- Conflict of interest with relationship between Councillors & Complainant
- In the current economic climate, it is a disgraceful waste of tax-payers money
- Council should be tackling more pertinent issues, such as traffic control, sewage & littering

I have personally spent countless hours over the years, clearing litter from the areas around the beaches and harbour and pushing for additional bins to be installed to encourage waste disposal. Protecting our natural environment and the seas, never mind the impression that visitors take away with them, has to be a massive priority for an AONB which relies on tourism.

In conclusion, rather than ostracising locals and visitors to our beautiful AONB, please protect and enhance what we have at Ballintoy and its surrounding areas for generations to come. Promoting petty, money & time-wasting exercises do nothing more than fail to impress the community and wider public you were elected to serve.

I trust this proposal will not proceed.

Objection 54

Totally ridiculous and against this proposed dog control order.

Objection 55

To Whom It May Concern

I completely reject the proposal of a total dog exclusion order at the above area. If there have been incidents of poor dog control then those should be dealt with more robustly but an outright ban is absurd.

Not only has the north coast historically been known for its local 'staycation' draw of people to the area, in recent years its appeal has brought many from outside NI. This must provide a huge financial

injection to the area and a large percentage of that spending power is brought by people visiting and holidaying with family. That includes dogs. To exclude dogs completely- even if from what the Council may believe is a small area, would prevent a long scenic walk around the coastline as the route is broken. I know if I were visiting for that purpose the fact I couldn't walk the entire route would discourage me.

I am a responsible dog owner who picks up, and controls my animals throughout the year. Perhaps the Council, who have disregarded the advice from their own animal control advisors by bringing forth this proposal, could engage with them and dog owners as well as land owners to negotiate a more agreeable solution. This could include robust enforcement of legislation, signage, a visible presence of inspection/ surveillance, or barrier along the pathway to prevent whatever concerns have been raised.

The presence of a total exclusion order would certainly deter me from visiting the north coast altogether. I'll take my spending power elsewhere to somewhere more welcoming and where there is no fear of accidentally entering an area where we are not welcome. NI is already so many years behind both the mainland and Europe when it comes to being welcoming and facilitating holidays with dogs that our choices are becoming increasingly limited. If there were more dog friendly areas generally, people would perhaps not feel the need to 'let loose' in areas where it is unwelcome.

To be clear an exclusion of dogs in the above area is not what has been supported by your own animal control experts nor is it an acceptable solution to the public.

Objection 56

Hi

As an owner of 3 dogs who are very much a part of our family, I would like you to reconsider banning dogs on the ballintoy coastal path.

As a resident of causeway coast and glens We love days out as a family, dogs included. Having dogs on a lead along the path is not an issue for any responsible dog owners.

The incident you talk about hasn't been proven, the report carried out didn't see any issue with dogs on the path so use common sense and keep the path available to dog owners.

Small businesses struggle as it is without restricting visitors to the area.

Objection 57

I do not agree with this proposed Dogs Exclusion Order.

I find it hard to believe you have ignored the recommendations of your own officers and have pressed ahead with an expensive consultation process for an order. It is a disgrace that public money has been spent when there is overwhelming evidence that this course of action is not justified. Your officers are independent experts so I can only conclude that some external individual is exerting undue pressure to make the Council go against it's own staff.

I am disgusted at the waste of public money and by the Council's insistence on pressing ahead with this proposal which clearly is a wholly unjustified attack on dog lovers and which will undermine the dog friendly tourism industry.

Objection 58

Good Afternoon

I would like to object to any proposed ban of dogs along Ballintoy and whitepark bay. As a responsible dog owner, resident and holiday let/dog friendly owner, I feel this would be detrimental to my personal well-being and business.

More and more businesses are welcoming dog walkers so this would be a backward step.

Dog walkers are all year round visitors to the north coast, rather than fair weather visitors.

I totally agree that all animals including livestock should be protected from dog attacks, however these I understand are few and can be resolved by ensuring dogs are kept under control. I do not feel all responsible dog owners should be punished for the few irresponsible owners.

Objection 59

I oppose the Balintoy to Whitepark Bay Dog Ban .

Council itself has provided a compelling case against such a ban in the quotations from its own report set out below

“Monitoring was undertaken during a period when there was potential for increased use by the public and their dogs in good weather.

Monitoring was carried out on weekdays from 29th April to 27th May 2022. In total 10 monitoring visits of monitoring was carried out at the lands in question. In order for an offence to be committed under Regulation 25 of the Dogs (NI) Order 1983 livestock must be present on the land in question and dogs must be off leash and not under control. In summary the findings are:

- Of the 10 visits NO offences were detected whereby livestock was present and dogs were off leash

A previous monitoring exercise was carried out by officers from the Enforcement Team and the Senior Environmental Health Officer for Enforcement during the week and at weekends from 31st January to 22nd February 2022. In summary the findings were:

- Of the 37 visits NO offences were detected whereby livestock was present and dogs were off leash

Environmental Services engaged with the person who made the request for the Dog Control Order to provide a written witness statement indicating the extent of the problem in their experience and to provide supplementary evidence to support any losses incurred such as veterinary records.

The complainant provided a witness statement confirming their general complaint of the land being used by dog owners but there are no specific details of number of incidents of dogs attacking livestock, no details of numbers of livestock lost and no veterinary evidence of treatment of livestock following dog attacks.

Considerations for Council

- There already exists legislation whereby dogs must be under control by means of a leash on lands where livestock is present.
- The relevant guidance requires that the introduction of any Dog Control Order must be justified.
- Councils must take into account the interests of dog owners to be able to exercise their dogs without undue restrictions.
- Any proposed Dog Control Order must have a public consultation and the responses from this consultation such as objections to the Dog Control Order must be considered.
- The introduction of any Dog Control Order is subject to legal challenge and may fail if Council cannot demonstrate that such an Order is required and justified.
- The Environmental Health Department have NO recorded complaints of any incidents of dogs worrying livestock on these lands.
- From the total of 47 monitoring visits undertaken by the Enforcement Team NO relevant offences were detected.
- The witness statement by the complainant does NOT provide any supporting evidence in relation to the complaint.

Recommendation

It is recommended that members of the Environmental Services Committee make a recommendation to Council that Council does not progress the procedure to introduce a Dog Control Order excluding dogs from these lands."

Minutes meeting Council 14 June 2022

Objection 60

I am a responsible dog owner, who as a local visitor and member of the National Trust, make regular visits to the North Antrim Coast with my family and dogs. We love the walk from Port Ballintoy to Whitepark Bay. I know, as do any of the other dog owners that I have met on the path, that livestock are regularly found on the land from the first gate from the Port to the beach (and often beyond), and always put our dogs on a lead when they are there. I have never seen any livestock being 'worried' nor chased. Indeed, if there are cattle present we do not walk it. I deeply regret if there have been any isolated incidents that have left an animal hurt, injured or worse by any dogs, and certainly think the owners involved should be brought to account, an exclusion order imposed and the farmer compensated in full.

However, I do not agree that dogs should be banned in its entirety. Yes, a bylaw that dogs should be on leads at all times, with clear signage for this would be appropriate and proportionate, due to the fact that there is no evidence of the alleged damage caused.

It is totally disproportionate to ban dogs. The Antrim Coast is an area of outstanding outdoor beauty and somewhere people come (often with dogs) to enjoy. Please do not make it a non dog friendly area.

Objection 61

To exclude dogs from this stretch of the coastline would directly hamper my ability to walk along the coast. It would force me up onto the dangerous coastal road and in turn add to the possibility of me or one of my children being hit by a car.

This section of the public path enables us as a family to enjoy the beauty of the coast and sample some lovely food when we arrive in Ballintoy.

I would ask Council to ensure that this path remains open to all families and not just those without dogs.

Objection 62

This Order is unnecessary, and goes utterly against the Councils own protocols. No evidence should mean no action, the landowner in question seems to be controlling this situation, not the council and all other stakeholders. It should stop here. I use the beach regularly, never had an issue with these, very few, cattle and have never seen any incidents either. I suggest you examine the landowners attitude to rights of way across public land and the roaming laws in general, and see if they have an agenda that will hugely impact the use of these increasingly popular walks.

Objection 63

I am not a dog owner myself but I do walk through this area probably over a hundred times a year.

I'm aware that there have been issues with dogs and sheep in this area over the last few years particularly and have witnessed dogs chasing sheep here myself. However, I would say that most dogs owners are responsible and have their dogs under control on a lead when sheep are in the area.

I'd be very surprised and disappointed if there are any issues with the regular users of this route. Any issues I've witnessed have involved day trippers to the area letting their dogs run freely.

It would be totally wrong to prevent responsible owners from walking their pets in this area where many have been doing so for their lifetime. Nowhere else along the coastal route is there a draconian ban on dog walking to my knowledge. Also for a large part of the year as there is no livestock in this area, a ban on dog walking would be pointless.

I also wonder if the same irresponsible people who don't keep their dogs on a lead would pay any attention to a no dogs sign either, the net result could be the responsible owners obey the rules and go elsewhere and the ones that cause trouble still cause trouble. So nothing would be gained except lifelong walkers would have lost what is probably a favourite route for many.

I think more prominent signage requiring dogs to be kept on leads would be a more appropriate step, the signs displayed last summer were very tiny and more amateur than official looking. Maybe this would be more likely adhered to than a ban and if nothing else it should certainly be tried first.

Objection 64

With regards to the consultation for the above proposed Dog exclusion order.

I wish to lodge my objection to this proposed dog exclusion order. My house is at Whitepark Bay and I have walked the path to Ballintoy Harbour for decades.

It does not make sense to me to have an established coastal walking route from as far as Portballintrae to Ballintoy or indeed to Carrick a Rede which people do continually, all year round, with a dog, only to find that a section of the path is not traversable due to having a dog on a lead.

This path is on a part of the coast which is a widely promoted tourist attraction for visitors as well as a pleasure for local residents to enjoy.

The fact that it could have a section in the middle of it where dogs are excluded but either side of it dogs are allowed is illogical.

I understand that wardens/observers have visited this area and have not recorded any misbehaviour by a dog or it's owner and in fact all dogs were kept controlled and managed on their leads. In fact there are times when there is no livestock around.

There should be proper official Council signage for owners to keep their dogs on a lead and control them appropriately.

This order for dogs to be kept on a lead could and should be monitored by wardens/council staff with fixed penalty fines issued if anyone does not comply.

Objection 65

I do not agree with a total ban on dogs in this area. This punishes responsible dog owners like myself who can control their dogs – Surely ensuring dogs are kept on leads and under control would be more appropriate?

Objection 66

I have just become aware of the proposed dog ban from Ballintoy to Whitepark Bay and completely disagree with it. Whilst I sympathise with the landowner and understand his reasons for this proposal it doesn't make sense. Many walkers and their dogs walk from Portballintrae to the Rope bridge which obviously includes this part of the coastal walk. What are they supposed to do when they get to this leg, carry it?

Instead there should be a complete ban on dogs running free on this part and so preventing injuries to the sheep or cows. I know this could be hard to enforce but responsible dog owners as soon as they see the notice will abide by the rule.

Why ruin this walk for the majority because of the irresponsibility of the few.

Objection 67

Hi, I have walked my dog on lead from Ballintoy to white park bay many a time.

My dog has ignored the sheep.

I am emailing to let you know that I am against the farmer trying to ban dogs from the public right of way.

The farmer has had no sheep injured, and there have been no incidents.

I ask that this email be replied to, and understand that the farmer in question has no right to put a sign up to say he will shoot dogs, this is wrong and illegal that he is taking matters into his own hands, please keep me informed

Objection 68

Good morning.

I have just read that you are considering banning people taking their dogs on the coastal paths at Ballintoy.

Firstly my question to you would be what are you actually thinking?

Secondly I would like to ask why you are discriminating against our loyal family pets who mean the world to us? Like your family, our dogs are part of our family.

I wonder if you have actually considered the detrimental affect this will have on the area.

Do you know how much money pet owners bring to the areas. Have you even looked at the potential danger that you will be causing businesses with the loss of all the revenue that dog owners will spend on accommodation and eateries.

Family pet holidays bring millions to the country. Why are you happy to throw that all away.

I can't actually believe in 2023 when we are all fighting for equality you would even consider this ban.

More damage is done to the environment by humans, than that of their pets.

I await in anticipation for your response on this matter and would also like to know your reason for even considering this kind of discrimination.

Objection 69

I strongly object to the proposed dog ban. The reports following the council investigation are that there is no evidence of an issue. As a resident of NI I have walked my dog off the lead on this very beautiful section of coast with no issues. To prevent this in the future without evidence of problems is wrong in my opinion. While I have sympathy with farmers who have lost animals due to

dog worrying this does not seem to be the case at this location and a total ban is an extreme solution.

Objection 70

Hi as a local resident and frequent user of this path I object to this order dogs should be on a lead and penalty charge applied if dogs are allowed to run free

Objection 71

To whom it may concern,

I oppose the dog ban, and in the words of your own experts here are the reasons why

We quote

“- The Environmental Health Department have NO recorded complaints of any incidents of dogs worrying livestock on these lands.

- From the total of 47 monitoring visits undertaken by the Enforcement Team NO relevant offences were detected.

- The witness statement by the complainant does NOT provide any supporting evidence in relation to the complaint.

Recommendation

It is recommended that members of the Environmental Services Committee make a recommendation to Council that Council does not progress the procedure to introduce a Dog Control Order excluding dogs from these lands.”

Minutes meeting Council 14 June 2022

These 19 Councillors simply ignored this advice and voted to go ahead anyway

WHY ?

Objection 72

I wish to have my objection to the implementation of this order noted.

Objection 73

I would like to voice my objection to the proposal of introducing a dog ban from Balintoy to Whitepark Bay. As a regular visitor to the area, I would have to stop coming to the area if the proposal goes ahead as we only visit that particular area because it is so dog friendly - we stay at dog friendly accommodation in the area (hotels, airbnb and campsites) and spend quite a considerable amount of money visiting tourist attractions and local eateries. This would no longer be an option to us if we were unable to bring our dog with us. While I empathise with the local landowner whose livestock have allegedly been attacked by uncontrolled dogs, surely these have been isolated

incidents and enforcing a complete ban on dogs in the area is a drastic step. Surely insisting that dogs remain on leads in the area would suffice?

I will be following this closely and hope that fellow dog owners voice their concerns.

Objection 74

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the current Dog Control Order proposed between Whitepark Bay and Ballintoy.

I regularly visit and stay in the Fullerton Arms in Ballintoy which is dog friendly so that I can walk along the coast with my pet dog. While staying in Ballintoy I contribute to the local economy, overnight accommodation, restaurants, garages and entertainment. I visit and stay over at least four times a year along with friends and family.

If this backward legislation is passed I will no longer be spending my time or money in this council area as my dog comes everywhere with me. There are plenty of other areas in Northern Ireland and Ireland which are more welcoming to dog owners. Since the pandemic there are more dog owners than ever and you will be excluding a large percentage of the tourism market.

There are many responsible dog owners but those who are in the minority are the ones who should be punished not the majority who keep their dogs on a lead. Simply enforce the dogs on a lead rule and problem solved.

I do hope that common sense prevails and this proposed legislation is binned.

Objection 75

As a regular holiday renter in Ballintoy and a responsible dog owner I have followed this debate with interest. So, although not disclosed on this consultation,

I am aware that this is the result of one complainant. That no evidence has been presented. t
That your own officials recommended it not be implemented. That it is completely unjustified and will have a detrimental impact on tourism and the reputation of the Council.

Your own teams visited the site 47 times without witnessing any dog-related offences.

The complainant's witness statement does not provide any supporting evidence in relation to his complaint.
During two visits undertaken by an elected member, three dogs were observed off-lead with no offences noted

i am totally opposed to this draconian action.

Comments on proposed Dogs Exclusion Order: -

Objection 76

Dear Sir/ Madam,

I was extremely surprised and disappointed to hear about the potential banning of dogs from this walking route on the North Coast.

From the perspective of tourism it is very shortsighted. Northern Ireland has become very dog friendly since the pandemic with many families taking on new pets. This has encouraged people to holiday closer to home, spending money on renting holiday properties, B&B's and using hotels in your region. This brings in much money and these canine friends are often the motivation to spend locally. There has been an increase in dog friendly cafes etc, forward thinking businesses attracting money to remote areas dependent on outside funding.

Banning dogs from popular walking routes seems like a step backwards compared to what is happening in the rest of the country and that is not a message the region wants to project.

Without beautiful walks like this the area loses its special status as a tourist coastal holiday spot on the island of Ireland. If people who holiday here for the walks on the beaches, coastal paths and scenic walks lose the option to bring their dog, the region will lose tourist income. Worth considering. Responsible dog owners respect the outdoor environment. There are forward thinking ways of managing this situation and maximising income for the area. I hope we will be able to visit again - but it will be dependent on access to walks such as this.

I look forward to hearing back from you.

Objection 77

I am 65 have 2 lovely dogs which I walk regularly with my wife and children. If you, the council proceed down this path, where next will a problem arise and a similar notion to stop people from enjoying the natural beauty of our wee country.

It has been acknowledged that pets are a health benefit to the young and old whom without both (pets and natural beauty) will be distraught.

No doubt to ban pets will have to be Policed which will be expensive going forward. If monies were to be used; stopping dog fouling with owners advised to keep their pets on a lead would certainly help.

How would an owner know if a pet fouled if running free.

Objection 78

I would like to register my objection to these plans. I am a visitor to the area from elsewhere in northern Ireland. I bring my dog (on lead if livestock around).

The banning of dogs from parts of the walk in the area make me less likely to visit the whole area thus reducing tourism.

It is unfair to ban dogs from a public footpath – dogs are I believe legally allowed on them. There is no reason for this one footpath to have special treatment. Owners are obliged to keep them under control so no need to ban them.

The council wants to encourage outdoor participation -so let people access outdoor spaces.

The landowner if he feels owning popular amenity land to be a hardship should be supported to fence off the footpath or a suitable alternative if dog attacks are an issue.

Objection 79

I wish to register my objection to the above. As a dog walker I frequently walk across these fields with my dog which is always on a lead. I am aware that the farmer has concerns regarding his sheep however I am local and have been walking these fields for many years - I have never seen sheep being worried or any dog being near the sheep.

My dog is kept on a short lead if there are any sheep in the area and there has never been a problem therefore I am strongly against any prohibition of dogs on these fields.

I do stress that all dog owners should keep their dogs on leads at all times.

Objection 80

I wish to register my feelings about the proposed dog ban at Ballintoy through to White park bay. I DO NOT agree with this proposed ban. I have a number of questions about this.

1. Why has this ban been proposed when there is apparently no evidence or any reports of a dog attacking livestock on this land nor has there been any convictions for such?
2. Why does one person, ie the land owner have such sway that they can push through this consultation which may end up in a ban affecting hundreds of responsible local dog owners, tourists and local businesses ?
3. Why are the council considering a ban which will severely affect local dog friendly businesses, such as the very popular Bothy and the Fullerton Arms? Dog owners visit these businesses after walking their dogs locally, if this is no longer allowed their businesses will suffer.
4. Why was the land owner allowed to put up signs banning dogs and threatening to shoot dogs? This is surely against the law, very divisive and dangerous? See photograph of sign below.



4. I am vehemently against this proposed ban, when there is no evidence of any form of dog attack against livestock on this land I do not understand why the council are even entertaining it, what are your reasons when there is no evidence?

Objection 81

I oppose the dog Ban at Ballintoy for the following reasons that your experts put forward and also recommend that no ban is necessary:

"- The Environmental Health Department have NO recorded complaints of any incidents of dogs worrying livestock on these lands.

- From the total of 47 monitoring visits undertaken by the Enforcement Team NO relevant offences were detected.

- The witness statement by the complainant does NOT provide any supporting evidence in relation to the complaint.

Recommendation

It is recommended that members of the Environmental Services Committee make a recommendation to Council that Council does not progress the procedure to introduce a Dog Control Order excluding dogs from these lands."

Minutes meeting Council 22 June 2022

So can you please tell me why 19 Councillors simply ignored this advice and voted to go ahead anyway?

Objection 82

I am completely against this proposal. Dogs are a huge part of family life

They are the reason why family's decide to holiday at home in their caravans instead of going abroad. By banning dogs on the beaches you will directly effect tourism and the struggling economy of these seaside towns and villages. The North coast is for everyone to enjoy. The locals walk their dogs on these beaches daily with no issues or concerns. They should not be excluded. Instead the council should supply more bins and more dog bags to support owners to be responsible.

Objection 83

We, being dog owners and having lived at White Park Bay for the past 50 years, have not been aware of any problems with dogs molesting livestock at Balintoy Harbour, nor along the route from there to WPB. It may be that problems arise from people driving to the harbour café and letting their dogs loose.

No such problems arise at White Park Bay.

The present public benefit opportunity provided for the exercise of dogs & their owners should not be compromised in the absence of substantiated harm by dogs to livestock.

We would suggest that the maximum restriction might be a public notice stating that dogs should be on leads at all times.

Objection 84

Hi,

My family visit Ballycastle regularly as we have family that live in the area. I am appalled to hear that there is a suggestion that dogs should be banned from the above route.

I understand there may be some issues, but as a dog owner, we bring our dog on all holidays with us. This means that as holiday makers we bring our dog on all hikes. I believe that the issues should be addressed by focussing on the offenders, but not making responsible owners pay for this.

The right to roam is something which is so valuable in England and if we could replicate this effectively in NI it would do so much for our tourist industry. Please do not take this backward step. Dogs are very much part of people's family and I honestly believe that adequate signage to advise regarding livestock and enforcing penalties for those that don't comply with appropriate dogs on leads sections would go a long way.

Please treat this as an official objection to this move.

Objection 85

I am writing to object to the ban of dogs in this area. We regularly walk our dog from Whitepark Bay to Ballintoy Harbour. We are aware that sheep are grazing in the fields and keep our dog on a lead.

A sign notifying visitors of the presence of sheep and that it is mandatory to keep dogs would be a solution. If visitors ignore this notice, then they should be fined.

Objection 86

This area should be used by all members of the public, including those who are walking their dogs. Dogs are peoples family, and getting out in fresh air for exercise is of great importance. To propose a ban on this area for dog walkers is just ludicrous. The impact on the local economy will be detrimental as it will deter people from coming to this area of NI with their dog. It is a non sensical idea and I hope this proposal does not happen.

Objection 87

I disagree with the proposed dog exclusion order. The benefits of dog ownership are immense and the role of public officials and publicly elected officials should be for the wellbeing of all citizens and should be promoting inclusionary policies, not exclusionary. It's impossible to tell the rationale behind this Order from the limited information shared but if it's in response to specific concerns in the area, an exclusion order only serves to punish law abiding people who keep their dogs under control and clean after them at all times anyway. They are the only ones who pay attention to such orders. People with out of control dogs who ignore their mess will ignore the exclusion order. A better use of council time and resources is education, support and enforcement of existing requirements for good dog ownership. These type of policies create fear-mongering and this seems to have been done in total secrecy, there has been limited publicity about this consultation, again an exclusionary approach. I would guess the majority of your constituents are dog owners (never mind the impact of visitors for tourism), please don't alienate the good dog owners amongst us.

Objection 88

Based on the information provided, I oppose this proposal. Information regarding the proposed Dog Exclusion Order, as published on the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council website, does not set out a reasonable rationale for this proposal. Therefore, it is impossible to provide full comment on the need for such an Order. No information has been provided to the public in relation to the number or nature of incidents where dogs have caused nuisance in the specified area. No information has been provided to the public in relation to the number or nature of complaints received by the Council in the specified area. No information has been provided to the public in relation to other measures previously taken by Council to respond to any such incidents or complaints and manage the risk of dogs in the specified area, and why such measures have not been successful. As such, it is my opinion that the proposed Dog Exclusion Order is not proportionate. Before taking such a measure as to exclude all dogs from the specified area, Council should first give consideration to other responses and controls. For example, has consideration been given to making it a requirement that all dogs within the specified area be kept on a lead? I understand that there are (or previously have been) signs stating that all dogs in the area must be kept on a lead. How has

this been enforced? Where there have been incidents in the specified area involving dogs causing nuisance, have these dogs been on a lead? It would be wrong for Council to move to impose further restrictions on dog walking in the area, where it is already failing in its duty to properly enforce existing regulations

Objection 89

I wish to comment on the Public Consultation on the proposal to the introduction of the above Order.

My family own a property on Harbour Road, Ballintoy and I have been a regular visitor to the area for nearly 30 years. I have looked after the surrounding area and protected it on every visit with litter picks and cleanups of the surrounding lands and beaches ever since I was a little girl. When I had Cancer in my twenties, just about able to walk that stretch of land for some fresh air, with my family (a Dog is a family member too), I took great joy and peace in absorbing that place and breathing the fresh air with my loved ones. They and Ballintoy got me through. Do not destroy moments like that for others.

Dogs are NOT a problem at Ballintoy, but I can tell you what is. People who think inwardly and become blind to the real global problems, and especially those that are appearing in our own local contexts. Sewage in the sea. THIS is what is happening in Ballintoy, and in a few short years, with every visit I can see the effects. I feel that council would be foolish to spend their time and resources on this Order, when this place of natural beauty should be appreciated by all and respected, as it is. Council just needs to play its part in the only problem.

I strenuously object to the Dog Control Order proposal for the following reasons:

- There is no supporting evidence to uphold the proposal
- Responsible dog-owners are being unfairly penalised
- It's a Public Right of Way
- Premature & disgusting use of language on signage
- Off-putting signage and order for the tourism industry – which Ballintoy and I am sure, your council, has been thriving on up until this
- Waste of tax-payers money
- Council should be dealing with important issues, such as sewage

I am a member of Surfers Against Sewage and am appalled that Council still have not addressed the issue of effluent being dumped into the sea at Ballintoy Harbour. We can arrange to come and speak with Council members if that would assist with a prompt and effective resolution?

This would be a more constructive use of Council time and energy, benefitting both the environment and the people who endanger themselves by using the sea in its current state.

Objection 90

I encourage you to please reconsider this order, which would mean a total ban on people and families with pet dogs visiting the beautiful area between Ballintoy and White Park Bay. Dog friendly tourism along the North Coast is a major attraction for many; personally, I favour holidays in this part of the world over trips abroad because there are so many places I can bring my dog, who is a part of my family. These types of orders often put people off coming and would lead to less visitors, therefore impacting the economy of the area. Myself, and most of my friends and family, are keen to

support local business and tourism in NI, but if it was the case that our dogs were banned from certain places, we would reconsider visiting these areas. Please consider the impact this would have on local business owners with pet friendly establishments such as Indigo Café, Tilly's, Pets at the Port, Fullerton Arms etc. Also, please consider the upset this will cause to thousands of responsible visitors to these beauty spots who every year attend with their dogs and cause no issue. Instead of banning dogs entirely, I feel the council should be encouraging visitors and locals to work together and respect each other.

Objection 91

I have a jug, which is rather a small dog, and on the way from the North Coast going back to Newtownards we stop off around this area for a break and my wife and I and our dog really enjoy stretching our legs. We would find it rather disappointing if we were not allowed to take our dog for a walk and a run. She would not go after any livestock as she is not interested in such. I for one am against a ban on dogs. Every owner has a responsibility to have a good recall on their dog, if not, then to have a leash. If there has been no evidence of any breeches then no ban should be enforced.

Objection 92

I oppose the Balintoy to Whitepark Bay Dog Ban .

Council itself has provided a compelling case against such a ban in the quotations from its own report set out below

“Monitoring was undertaken during a period when there was potential for increased use by the public and their dogs in good weather.

Monitoring was carried out on weekdays from 29th April to 27th May 2022. In total 10 monitoring visits of monitoring was carried out at the lands in question. In order for an offence to be committed under Regulation 25 of the Dogs (NI) Order 1983 livestock must be present on the land in question and dogs must be off leash and not under control. In summary the findings are:

- Of the 10 visits NO offences were detected whereby livestock was present and dogs were off leash

A previous monitoring exercise was carried out by officers from the Enforcement Team and the Senior Environmental Health Officer for Enforcement during the week and at weekends from 31st January to 22nd February 2022. In summary the findings were:

- Of the 37 visits NO offences were detected whereby livestock was present and dogs were off leash

Environmental Services engaged with the person who made the request for the Dog Control Order to provide a written witness statement indicating the extent of the problem in their experience and to provide supplementary evidence to support any losses incurred such as veterinary records.

The complainant provided a witness statement confirming their general complaint of the land being used by dog owners but there are no specific details of number of incidents of dogs attacking livestock, no details of numbers of livestock lost and no veterinary evidence of treatment of livestock following dog attacks.

Considerations for Council

- There already exists legislation whereby dogs must be under control by means of a leash on lands where livestock is present.
- The relevant guidance requires that the introduction of any Dog Control Order must be justified.
- Councils must take into account the interests of dog owners to be able to exercise their dogs without undue restrictions.
- Any proposed Dog Control Order must have a public consultation and the responses from this consultation such as objections to the Dog Control Order must be considered.
- The introduction of any Dog Control Order is subject to legal challenge and may fail if Council cannot demonstrate that such an Order is required and justified.
- The Environmental Health Department have NO recorded complaints of any incidents of dogs worrying livestock on these lands.
- From the total of 47 monitoring visits undertaken by the Enforcement Team NO relevant offences were detected.
- The witness statement by the complainant does NOT provide any supporting evidence in relation to the complaint.

Recommendation

It is recommended that members of the Environmental Services Committee make a recommendation to Council that Council does not progress the procedure to introduce a Dog Control Order excluding dogs from these lands."

Minutes meeting Council 14 June 2022

Objection 93

Dear Councillor

I was extremely disappointed to learn of your approach to vote for the ban on walking dogs along the Causeway Coastal route at Ballintoy.

Yes an outright ban, not even permitting the walking of dogs on a lead at all times, I further understand even your own officials have confirmed there has not been a single incident on that path nor has there been a single prosecution under the current rule that requires dogs to be on a lead. So why vote for the ban? Maybe you would like to explain your justification for your vote?

To many people, like myself, dogs are part of their family & they enjoy visiting parts of our beautiful country along with their dog as I do & to that end we often spend money in the areas we visit. So this proposed ban is going to discriminate against all the responsible dog owners, who live near or enjoy visiting the Causeway coast. Why not ensure the existing legislation is implemented before enacting any ban?

I would say this is very short sighted approach by you, as responsible dog owners on family pet friendly holidays already bring financial benefit to the businesses in the area & I am sure they can all do with all additional footfall rather than deterring dog loving walkers from your area & would this not be something you as a councillor should be promoting? To be honest it seems like you are discriminating against responsible dog owners, rather than addressing any issues that are caused by irresponsible dog owners & ensuring you promote responsible dog owners.

I wonder if you have actually considered the detrimental effect the ban will have on the area in terms of financial spend by the visitors? I doubt if the numbers of responsible dog owners you will ban will be replaced by non-dog walking visitors to the area as a result of the ban.

I look forward to your response, after you have reconsidered your approach & the effects this ban would have on local tourism in your area.

Objection 94

A dog ban shouldn't go ahead. Responsible dog owners shouldn't be punished. There are already restrictions in some areas that limit dog owners freedom. We should be encouraging people to get out and encouraging responsible dog ownership as Dogs are good for mental and physical health. This would restrict freedom and decrease physical exercise. Alternatives would be walking at the side of the road and that has dangers.

Objection 95

To whom it may concern,

I oppose the Balintoy to Whitepark Bay Dog Ban .

Council itself has provided a compelling case against such a ban in the quotations from its own report set out below

"Monitoring was undertaken during a period when there was potential for increased use by the public and their dogs in good weather.

Monitoring was carried out on weekdays from 29th April to 27th May 2022. In total 10 monitoring visits of monitoring was carried out at the lands in question. In order for an offence to be committed under Regulation 25 of the Dogs (NI) Order 1983 livestock must be present on the land in question and dogs must be off leash and not under control. In summary the findings are:

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Environmental Services engaged with the person who made the request for the Dog Control Order to provide a written witness statement indicating the extent of the problem in their experience and to provide supplementary evidence to support any losses incurred such as veterinary records.

The complainant provided a witness statement confirming their general complaint of the land being used by dog owners but there are no specific details of number of incidents of dogs attacking livestock, no details of numbers of livestock lost and no veterinary evidence of treatment of livestock following dog attacks.

Considerations for Council

- There already exists legislation whereby dogs must be under control by means of a leash on lands where livestock is present.
- The relevant guidance requires that the introduction of any Dog Control Order must be justified.
- Councils must take into account the interests of dog owners to be able to exercise their dogs without undue restrictions.
- Any proposed Dog Control Order must have a public consultation and the responses from this consultation such as objections to the Dog Control Order must be considered.
- The introduction of any Dog Control Order is subject to legal challenge and may fail if Council cannot demonstrate that such an Order is required and justified.
- The Environmental Health Department have NO recorded complaints of any incidents of dogs worrying livestock on these lands.
- From the total of 47 monitoring visits undertaken by the Enforcement Team NO relevant offences were detected.
- The witness statement by the complainant does NOT provide any supporting evidence in relation to the complaint.

Recommendation

It is recommended that members of the Environmental Services Committee make a recommendation to Council that Council does not progress the procedure to introduce a Dog Control Order excluding dogs from these lands."

Minutes meeting Council 14 June 2022.

If the ban was to be passed then the result would be a lot less footfall to the area creating less income and the area would be frowned upon by many dog loving families causing bad word of mouth!

Many thanks for your consideration.

Objection 96

If this exclusion order goes ahead and is approved it will be to the detriment of tourism in the area. Many people travel to the North Coast with their beloved pets for holidays and if this is put in place people will think twice. Personally my husband and I bought a caravan in Castlerock to enable us to bring our dog with us and enjoy the many walks in the area and we quite often walk here. I have on no occasion seen a dog off lead or causing any issues to livestock. The majority of dog owners are responsible people who control their pet and clean up after them. Do not punish animal lovers as it

could very much affect the local economy as these people put quite a lot of money through tills in the Causeway Coast & Glens area and many small businesses could suffer.

Objection 97

You should not proceed with the proposed ban on dogs at ballintoy.
You have no relevant evidence to do so
& you have been advised against it.

Objection 98

#Bintheban

I oppose the Balintoy to Whitepark Bay Dog Ban .

Council itself has provided a compelling case against such a ban in the quotations from its own report set out below

“Monitoring was undertaken during a period when there was potential for increased use by the public and their dogs in good weather.

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Considerations for Council

- There already exists legislation whereby dogs must be under control by means of a leash on lands where livestock is present.

- The relevant guidance requires that the introduction of any Dog Control Order must be justified.

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- Any proposed Dog Control Order must have a public consultation and the responses from this consultation such as objections to the Dog Control Order must be considered.
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- From the total of 47 monitoring visits undertaken by the Enforcement Team NO relevant offences were detected.
- The witness statement by the complainant does NOT provide any supporting evidence in relation to the complaint.

Recommendation

It is recommended that members of the Environmental Services Committee make a recommendation to Council that Council does not progress the procedure to introduce a Dog Control Order excluding dogs from these lands."

Minutes meeting Council 22 June 2022

Objection 99

Dear sir/madam.

Having just read the news article on the proposed dog ban above, I am writing with very strong feelings against the proposal.

The majority of dog owners are considerate and responsible. It is an area of outstanding beauty for the public to enjoy, and excellent area for exercise for families with dogs.

There are already a large number of beaches and coastal walks in the causeway area that do not allow dogs. The options for a free, healthy day out for responsible dog owners and their children is being more and more reduced by such knee jerk reactions to one of two poor dog owners.

I urge you very strongly to consider the community benefits of allowing this area to remain open to all.

Objection 100

Responsible dog walkers with dogs who are not a threat to livestock should not have their right of way encroached upon because of a very small number of animal worrying. Banning dogs from this area will impact negatively on the health and wellbeing of large numbers of walkers who will no

longer use the route if unable to bring their dog. These are routes that responsible dog owners have enjoyed using for a lifetime

Objection 101

I oppose the Balintoy to Whitepark Bay Dog Ban .

Council itself has provided a compelling case against such a ban in the quotations from its own report set out below

“Monitoring was undertaken during a period when there was potential for increased use by the public and their dogs in good weather.

Monitoring was carried out on weekdays from 29th April to 27th May 2022. In total 10 monitoring visits of monitoring was carried out at the lands in question. In order for an offence to be committed under Regulation 25 of the Dogs (NI) Order 1983 livestock must be present on the land in question and dogs must be off leash and not under control. In summary the findings are:

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- The introduction of any Dog Control Order is subject to legal challenge and may fail if Council cannot demonstrate that such an Order is required and justified.

- The Environmental Health Department have NO recorded complaints of any incidents of dogs worrying livestock on these lands.
- From the total of 47 monitoring visits undertaken by the Enforcement Team NO relevant offences were detected.
- The witness statement by the complainant does NOT provide any supporting evidence in relation to the complaint.

Recommendation

It is recommended that members of the Environmental Services Committee make a recommendation to Council that Council does not progress the procedure to introduce a Dog Control Order excluding dogs from these

Objection 102

Dear Sirs

I am saddened to learn of your council's proposal to stop walking dogs on public land and beaches.

Is this to deter visitors to the Causeway? If so, you will most certainly succeed. Should this ridiculous infringement be enforced, we will definitely, not, be returning to the area, will go elsewhere and spend our money where it is appreciated.

Hoping you will put a stop to this nonsense.

Objection 103

To whom it may concern,

I'd like to register my opinion on the proposed banning of all dogs along the public right of way between Ballintoy and Whitepark Bay.

I'm just curious if the council has fully understood the ramifications of such a ban. Given the rise in dog ownership over the last number of years, having an outright ban on dogs will likely signal to many potential tourists (myself included) that our visit isn't welcomed, our money isn't needed and we are better off looking for alternative tourist destinations purely because we have a canine family member.

I'm an avid walker, I've previously walked the coastal route between Portstewart and Ballintoy. I had hoped to return this Spring/Summer with my mini daxie to do part of this walk again. Why would I return here if the dog isn't welcome with me? She's joined me in the mournes, along the west coast and everywhere around Belfast with absolutely no issues because I've trained her well and have her under control.

Would it not be better to spend money enforcing leash laws and educating owners on responsible dog guardianship? I am aware of the increase in unruly dogs and have had plenty of conversations with fellow dog owners about their responsibilities. An outright ban, however, just seems ludicrous and will ensure I never visit this area of the north coast again, and this is a common opinion amongst the many dog groups I am a member of.

Hopefully the council can see reason and rethink this, the North Coast is a beautiful part of the world and I would be sad to feel like I was no longer welcomed there.

Objection 104

I am very much against the proposed dog ban between Ballintoy and White Park beach. I have a caravan at Portrush so pay rates in this council area. I am also a responsible dog owner who has spent time training my dog, keep her on a lead in this area and pick up her waste.

Dog owners bring a lot of money to this area, especially in the winter season and it would be very short sighted of the council to start banning dog from areas for no valid reason. My dog is part of my family and she should be able to go where I go when she is on a lead.

Objection 105

I am writing in regard to the Public Consultation on the proposal to the introduction of the above Order. My family have been long-term owners of a property on Harbour Road, Ballintoy and I have been a regular visitor to the area for the past 27 years. I am writing to express my objection to the Dog Control Order proposal for the following reasons:

- No valid supporting evidence
- Responsible dog-owners are being unfairly penalised
- This is a Public Right of Way
- Threatening use of language on signage
- Waste of tax-payers money when there are other matters of more significant importance requiring attention I am a dog-owner, I was brought up to be a responsible dog-owner and have always been considerate of others when walking my dog. I am hugely disappointed at the suggestion of the proposed Order. I have walked my dog over this Public Right of Way for the last 10 years with no issues on any occasion. Why should I, or my dog be penalised because of a possible few irresponsible people who may use this route? Issue fines on the individuals, instead of punishing the rest of the community and visitors. The Council would be far better placed investing its time and resources dealing with matters which will benefit the area, community and its visitors as a whole, than wasting time on misguided proposals. I trust this proposal will not proceed

Objection 106

Dear Sir or Madam

I wish to express my views in objection to The Dogs Exclusion (Lands at Ballintoy to Whitepark Bay) Order (2023) being proposed by Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council(the Council)

I wish to state that I am not in favour of or support of the proposed Order by the Council.

I would consider supporting reasonable measures the Council may take to address the compliance of dog owners and dog walkers to enter and use the lands at Ballintoy to Whitepark Bay (the Lands)

By all means require dog owners and dog walkers who wish to use the Lands to keep their pet or pets under control by use of a lead.

To manage this requirement the council could identify with appropriate signage at the point of entry to the Lands of the requirement, clearly advising of the risks associated with and the impact of uncontrolled dogs within the Lands. Illustrate by use of appropriate images on the signage the impact of dog worrying on livestock. Demonstrate the impact to the landowners livelihood. Make them fully aware and clearly state that they will be subject to fine for not adhering to the requirement. Deploy Dog Wardens or other competent Council staff to monitor, caution and if appropriate issue a fixed penalty fine for the breach of the rules or codes on those individuals who clearly disregard and disrespect the use of the Lands.

Please do not penalise the vast majority of responsible dog owners and dog walkers who respect the rules and codes. Do not deny them the pleasure of spending time in what is a unique area of outstanding natural beauty. Do not deny them their ability to maintain health and in some cases their mental well being by the imposition of this proposed Order.

For myself and my family, we have walked with a number of pet dogs in a controlled manner on this stretch of the coastline for over 25 years. During this time I have not seen dogs causing trouble with livestock in this area. Walking this route has provided our lives with significant and happy memories that would not have been possible had we not had access to the land with our pet dogs. Walking on this coastal path is incredibly important to us and I can imagine it is the same for a great number of local families too.

In regards to the alternative for dog walking tourists and locals, forcing individuals or participants onto the exceptionally busy Whitepark Road is in itself placing those individuals and participants in danger from traffic.

Should the Council succeed and impose this proposed Order what alternative safe passage will the Council provide to individuals or groups of walkers without threat or risk to their safety and well being?

I request that you provide my views and opinions to the Directorate of Environmental Services. I request the Directorate of Environmental Services consider the consequences and damage of this proposal to local and wider tourism. The increased usage and footfall in this part of the Borough during the phases of the recent pandemic must surely have not gone unnoticed by the Council. Why deter or deny returning and new tourists to this area by imposing this proposed Order. The Council , Aldermen, Councillors , officials and staff should be encouraging social and economic sustainability to the area and not discouraging it.

I request that you consider my views and opinion and do not take this proposal forward to implementation.

Objection 107

I'm writing to oppose the suggested Dog Exclusion order proposed to exclude dogs all year round from the public right of way through lands from Ballintoy to Whitepark Bay.

Many people over lockdown got a dog (as I did) for many reasons including to elevate loneliness and boredom. Speaking for myself I can confirm getting a dog during lockdown has had great impact on both my mental & physical health during the pandemic. I now love getting out with my dog, which I feel has helped me immensely during such difficult times. As we try now to rebuild our communities and improve our mental & physical health, we want to get out into the fresh air and enjoy the beauty around us with our new furry friends. I feel walking in such a scenic area as Ballintoy and Whitepark Bay aids in doing so. Although with the proposed control order, both locals and visitors to such a beauty spot would be unable to enjoy this with their dog. How can we be encouraging people to get active and get outside when restrictions are imposed on those with dogs?

I understand there are irresponsible dog owners out there, but by proposing a total excluding on dogs is punishing those who are responsible.

How will the exclusion be monitored? Will there be dedicated staff patrolling the site? Can legislation be put in place for all dogs to be on a lead instead of a total exclusion?

Of course issue fines for those not following the rules but don't exclude us responsible dog owners from such a beauty spot when an increase in spend and visitors to our country is so important at the moment. Embrace the fact that we are a nation of pet lovers and put other provisions in place.

Objection 108

To whom it may concern,

I strongly oppose the dog ban around the Ballintoy/whiterocks area.

I do agree that irresponsible dog owners should be punished accordingly for not controlling their dogs but it's unfair to allow these few to destroy the freedom to walk our beautiful countryside for responsible dog owners who lead walk and follow the orders.

Your own report had no findings of any animal worrying so why implement an order that you have found to be negative. Put your energy elsewhere. However, the right of way should be monitored and respect shown for the land owner. As soon as any positive signs of worrying are founded then of course a ban should be implemented and people need to understand that fact, but there needs to be evidence to prove this.

I am a dog owner and dog business owner but fully understand both sides.

Maybe a solution is to not ban yet but to monitor the situation over the incoming summer season? Then make a decision on policy.

Please put this email forward to the members at the upcoming meeting.

Many thanks and kind regards,

Objection 109

I'm extremely disappointed in this proposal I totally understand that dogs should be on leads but a complete ban will ruin this beautiful walk for so many people .Please rethink and change your policy to MUST BE ON LEADS At All TIMES!!

We are so far behind the rest of the world when it comes to dogs .Can I also ask if you were lost or injured would you be happy for a dog to assist in a search and rescue ?

Regards a very sad and unhappy responsible dog owner

Objection 110

I strongly object to the proposed Order. We regularly visit this area with our dog. As a couple unable to have children, our dog is an integral member of our family and travels everywhere with us. She helps me to manage my stress and anxiety especially when we are on walks together. I am a responsible owner who always picks up after my dog and has full control at all times its on and off lead . In America, dogs can travel on any public transport, including planes. In France, dogs are welcomed in any restaurants yet in the modern day, the Council is seeking to ban dogs from an outside space which is totally unjustified in the modern age we live. Pets are more and more integral members of family, the Council would not ban children from these spaces despite children also being subject to episodes of misbehaving and dangerous behaviour demonstrably uncontrollable by parents.

Perhaps an alternative method of enforcement could be considered ... eg CCTV or increased wardens who could also manage litter enforcement.

Many people travel to this area from outside to enjoy the environment it offers myself included. This Order will impact this decisions thereby removing investment from the area in local shops, cafes and restaurants that will be redirected to areas more welcoming.

This Order would represent a significant backward step that is not reflective of social progression. It would also, in my view, override my right to enjoy the country in which I live to the maximum levels possible with my family, potentially even breaching my Human Rights.

Objection 111

This proposed legislation is with without merit and has been based on unfounded testimony. It has been clealy documented that extensive observation by council representatives revealed little or no law breaking by dog owners and sufficient legislation already exists to deal with these matters. Therefore the proposal is neither propotionate nor necessary.

Objection 112

I oppose the Balintoy to Whitepark Bay Dog Ban .

Council itself has provided a compelling case against such a ban in the quotations from its own report set out below

“Monitoring was undertaken during a period when there was potential for increased use by the public and their dogs in good weather.

Monitoring was carried out on weekdays from 29th April to 27th May 2022. In total 10 monitoring visits of monitoring was carried out at the lands in question. In order for an offence to be committed under Regulation 25 of the Dogs (NI) Order 1983 livestock must be present on the land in question and dogs must be off leash and not under control. In summary the findings are:

- Of the 10 visits NO offences were detected whereby livestock was present and dogs were off leash

A previous monitoring exercise was carried out by officers from the Enforcement Team and the Senior Environmental Health Officer for Enforcement during the week and at weekends from 31st January to 22nd February 2022. In summary the findings were:

- Of the 37 visits NO offences were detected whereby livestock was present and dogs were off leash

Environmental Services engaged with the person who made the request for the Dog Control Order to provide a written witness statement indicating the extent of the problem in their experience and to provide supplementary evidence to support any losses incurred such as veterinary records.

The complainant provided a witness statement confirming their general complaint of the land being used by dog owners but there are no specific details of number of incidents of dogs attacking livestock, no details of numbers of livestock lost and no veterinary evidence of treatment of livestock following dog attacks.

Considerations for Council

- There already exists legislation whereby dogs must be under control by means of a leash on lands where livestock is present.
- The relevant guidance requires that the introduction of any Dog Control Order must be justified.
- Councils must take into account the interests of dog owners to be able to exercise their dogs without undue restrictions.
- Any proposed Dog Control Order must have a public consultation and the responses from this consultation such as objections to the Dog Control Order must be considered.
- The introduction of any Dog Control Order is subject to legal challenge and may fail if Council cannot demonstrate that such an Order is required and justified.
- The Environmental Health Department have NO recorded complaints of any incidents of dogs worrying livestock on these lands.
- From the total of 47 monitoring visits undertaken by the Enforcement Team NO relevant offences were detected.
- The witness statement by the complainant does NOT provide any supporting evidence in relation to the complaint.

Recommendation

It is recommended that members of the Environmental Services Committee make a recommendation to Council that Council does not progress the procedure to introduce a Dog Control Order excluding dogs from these lands."

Minutes meeting Council 14 June 2022

Objection 113

Dear Sir/Madam,

I saw the piece on BBC Newsline about the potential banning of dog walking along the coastal path at Portballintrae.

My opinion on the matter is simple. Dogs should be kept on a lead and owners need to be responsible and lift the poop!! That should be a Council-wide bylaw. Bins need to be provided too though.

The coastal path is beautiful and not suitable for dogs running free. They are a danger to livestock, children and other dogs.

My husband and I own a lovely dog who is generally very well behaved. She does, however, sometimes snap at other dogs if they run up to her off the lead. Very likely because she's on her lead and feels threatened, or perhaps because she wants to go and play but we're being responsible and keeping her under control. Allowing them to run free also provides owners with a convenient excuse to 'not see' when their dogs have pooped.....we see it regularly in Portstewart, Portrush, along the coastal path, in mountsandel forest etc. Not to mention on pavements across the Borough. Disgusting.

My final point is with regard to the landowner who thinks it's his right to block off part of the coastal path. I'm sure you know who he is, it's not hard to figure out. He has been doing it for years and, not only is the path not his to block, it is damaging to tourism, looks awful and also presents a hazard to walkers (with or without dogs).

The solution seems easy to me. Ban dogs running free, fine dog owners who don't clean up after their pets, and warn the farmer who keeps blocking the path with metal and other waste. Most importantly, conduct regular enforcement activity and publicise results.

Not too difficult really, surely?

Objection 114

To whom it may concern:

I don't think dogs should be banned from Ballintoy to Whitepark or any of the coastal glen walks. It seems absurd as I'm sure people live in the area. I also don't want to constantly be worried about my leashed dog if I go up for a weekend or an afternoon.

Objection 115

Hi

I wish to register my opposition to any proposal to exclude dogs as covered in the above Consultation.

At a time when exercise for all is encouraged nationwide this proposal is a backward step and very negative in promoting tourism in the Causeway area.

Whilst against exclusion I firmly believe that dogs must be on lead at all times throughout this part of the walk and that very large (whilst unattractive) signs should be displayed in two or three prominent places prior to start of the walk warning of the penalty fines applicable.

Warden spot checks could be assisted by a drone to identify wrong doers without the need to fully patrol through walking the area thus saving time and enabling more regular checks.

Objection 116

Dear Council Members,

I want to take this opportunity to write to you to oppose the Balintoy to Whitepark Bay Dog Ban.

Causeway Coast and Glens Council has provided a compelling case against such a ban in the quotations from its own report set out below.

“Monitoring was undertaken during a period when there was potential for increased use by the public and their dogs in good weather.

Monitoring was carried out on weekdays from 29th April to 27th May 2022. In total 10 monitoring visits were carried in the area in question. In order for an offence to be committed under Regulation 25 of the Dogs (NI) Order 1983 livestock must be present on the land in question and dogs must be off leash and not under control. In summary the findings are:

- Of the 10 visits NO offences were detected whereby livestock was present and dogs were off leash.

A previous monitoring exercise was carried out by officers from the Enforcement Team and the Senior Environmental Health Officer for Enforcement during the week and at weekends from 31st January to 22nd February 2022. In summary the findings were:

- Of the 37 visits NO offences were detected whereby livestock was present and dogs were off leash

Environmental Services engaged with the person who made the request for the Dog Control Order to provide a written witness statement indicating the extent of the problem in their experience and to provide supplementary evidence to support any losses incurred such as veterinary records.

The complainant provided a witness statement confirming their general complaint of the land being used by dog owners but there are no specific details of number of incidents of dogs attacking livestock, no details of numbers of livestock lost and no veterinary evidence of treatment of livestock following dog attacks.

Considerations for Council

- There already exists legislation whereby dogs must be under control by means of a leash on lands where livestock is present.
- The relevant guidance requires that the introduction of any Dog Control Order must be justified.
- Councils must take into account the interests of dog owners to be able to exercise their dogs without undue restrictions.
- Any proposed Dog Control Order must have a public consultation and the responses from this consultation such as objections to the Dog Control Order must be considered.
- The introduction of any Dog Control Order is subject to legal challenge and may fail if Council cannot demonstrate that such an Order is required and justified.
- The Environmental Health Department have NO recorded complaints of any incidents of dogs worrying livestock on these lands.
- From the total of 47 monitoring visits undertaken by the Enforcement Team NO relevant offences were detected.
- The witness statement by the complainant does NOT provide any supporting evidence in relation to the complaint.

Recommendation

It is recommended that members of the Environmental Services Committee make a recommendation to Council that does not progress the procedure to introduce a Dog Control Order excluding dogs from these lands."

Minutes meeting Council 22nd June 2022.

This overzealous piece of legislation is an overreaction, it's completely unnecessary and should be scrapped without delay.

I await your response.

Objection 117

The proposed Dog Control Order on lands at Ballintoy to Whitepark Bay is unnecessary, disproportional and an inappropriate use of dog control legislation.

The decision will be based on circumstantial and anecdotal evidence contrary to the reports of council officers who visited the site on several occasions. It will have a serious impact on travel and tourism within the area.

Of course, the worrying of livestock by uncontrolled dogs is something to be abhorred. And in circumstances where there is clear evidence of this happening then a dog control order may well be appropriate. This is not the case on this stretch of a public right of way.

I have walked this route with my dog on his lead on many occasions. I have never observed any dog worrying sheep. On most occasions sheep are well away from the main public right of way.

This stretch of the coastal path is an important link between Portbradden, Ballintoy and beyond. It is an outstanding area of landscape with stunning rock formations including the iconic Elephant Rock. It is a site that attracts many visitors who add to the economy of the region.

To deny all dogs access to this path is a total disproportionate response to a threat that has not been clearly defined. A requirement for all dogs to be kept on leads would be a fairer response that would significantly reduce the risk to any livestock while allowing all to enjoy this important section of the Causeway Coast.

Unilateral action by the current landowner in erecting signs that are threatening, inflammatory and highly misleading must be addressed. Any new signage should be agreed with the council and carry the Council logo.

It is important that the Council and councillors act fairly on this matter and are not unduly influenced by the landowner. I was extremely concerned to hear several councillors completely ignore the report of officers in favour of emotional and personal anecdotal evidence.

I ask therefore that the proposed ban on dogs be replaced with a far more proportionate and appropriate order to require dogs to be kept on leads. A monitoring program over the following 6 months would provide evidence as to whether this more sensible approach was working. At the same time consideration should be given to working with the landowner to erect a fence along this route. A solution that works very well along other sections of the coastal path.

I am willing to attend the council chamber and speak when this matter is next discussed.

Objection 118

I oppose the Balintoy to Whitepark Bay Dog Ban.

Council itself has provided a compelling case against such a ban in the quotations from its own report set out below.

“Monitoring was undertaken during a period when there was potential for increased use by the public and their dogs in good weather.

Monitoring was carried out on weekdays from 29th April to 27th May 2022. In total 10 monitoring visits of monitoring was carried out at the lands in question. In order for an offence to be committed under Regulation 25 of the Dogs (NI) Order 1983 livestock must be present on the land in question and dogs must be off leash and not under control. In summary the findings are:

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Considerations for Council

- There already exists legislation whereby dogs must be under control by means of a leash on lands where livestock is present.
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- The witness statement by the complainant does NOT provide any supporting evidence in relation to the complaint.

Recommendation

It is recommended that members of the Environmental Services Committee make a recommendation to Council that Council does not progress the procedure to introduce a Dog Control Order excluding dogs from these lands."

Minutes meeting Council 14 June 2022

Objection 119

Can you explain why this is going ahead ?

We quote

"- The Environmental Health Department have NO recorded complaints of any incidents of dogs worrying livestock on these lands.

- From the total of 47 monitoring visits undertaken by the Enforcement Team NO relevant offences were detected.
- The witness statement by the complainant does NOT provide any supporting evidence in relation to the complaint.

Recommendation

It is recommended that members of the Environmental Services Committee make a recommendation to Council that Council does not progress the procedure to introduce a Dog Control Order excluding dogs from these lands."

Objection 120

To Whom it may concern,

As a rate payer in the area I am totally opposed to any ban on dogs being walked on this part of the coastal path. I regularly walk along this path with my dog always on a lead. Most dog owners I have seen respect that there is livestock in this area and keep their dogs under control.

I suggest stronger signage would solve the problem in most instances.

Please acknowledge receipt of this email.

Objection 121

In relation to the above subject, I feel it is wrong to penalise all dog owners because of a minority of unchecked dogs causing problems to livestock.

As An alternative to excluding them why not make a law for dogs to be on leads when they are near fields where there is livestock?

With plenty of signage on display if dogowners are found to be disregarding this order they have only themselves to blame if their dog is not behaving.

As a dog owner, a walker and a lover of the countryside I would have no problem keeping my dog on his lead - for his own safety & the safety of livestock. I'm quite sure there are a lot of like minded people who would agree - to exclude all dogs isn't fair.

Objection 122

Hello,

As a (responsible) dog owner, I have every sympathy with the concerns expressed by the landowner regarding the irresponsible dog owners who do not control their pets, and allow them to pose a danger to livestock, but feel it would be sad if the overwhelming majority of people who own dogs were penalised as a consequence. Could an order to put dogs on leads in areas where livestock is farmed be an option?

The CCG area is , unfortunately, subject to too many incidences of free- ranging dogs depositing poo not picked up by owners; West Strand prom and beach being one place I visit most days and observe this. Again, this is the behaviour of a minority of dog owners, as most, like me would never allow their dog's poo to be left.

Another concern is litter; as an active member of NCWE, I daily lift and bin litter chucked away by selfish people.

More and better bins are needed, and more frequent emptying of them in busy times, as they often are overflowing and attacked by birds and rats. And what about some encouragingly worded signage about the need to bin litter and dog poo?

Objection 123

Totally against dogs being banned from this walk ballintoy to Whitepark, dogs walked on a lead are not a danger to sheep. Fine dog owners who do not put leads on their dogs.

Objection 124

I think this is ridiculous. I understand the farmers concerns. Most dog owners are responsible and will keep their dogs on a lead in an area of farmland observing the country code. A compromise would be that fines are imposed on dogs not on a lead in these areas and a reminder to owners that farmers have the right to shoot any dog who is worrying their livestock.

I love walking this area with my well behaved small dog surely it is an area to be enjoyed by all.

Objection 125

Comments on proposed Dogs Exclusion Order: -

1:- Order appears an extreme method to address "a" complaint from a landowner relating to an uncontrolled dog. I doubt the means proposed is either reasonable, proportional or necessary to the perceived problem. I further doubt the effectiveness of any legislation to combat an uncontrolled dog, owners who are irresponsible enough to have dogs and livestock mix in an uncontrolled manner are the same owners who will totally ignore this legislation.

2:- This issue pales to insignificance when compared to other problems within the borough, overnight unlawful camping on beaches, litter, broken bottles on footpaths and unkempt areas. It should be noted that no action (zero) has been taken against the hundreds of unlawful Motorhomes and campers. FOI dated refers 27/7/22 refers. Please explain how legislation and signage can be ignored in these cases which greatly effect a larger proportion of the borough population, yet you propose punitive measures on responsible dog owners due to one landowner, without considering measures to tackle the irresponsible. Should Governments propose legislation banning all driving on a road due to the behaviour of a few reckless individuals I suspect the matter would be considered as little more than a jest, yet as a council you are proposing a similar sledge hammer approach to this nut problem.

3. Legislation both national and bye-law already exists to cover irresponsible and reckless acts by dog owners and stray animals I fail to see how further blanket legislation will progress this problem. If enforcement officials were in place patrolling these areas then the current legislation is sufficient, additional legislation will prove worthless and will only seek to persecute the innocent and responsible. I suspect this may be an attempt to create the impression of action without any action.

4:- I have so far failed to establish an evidence base from the document available to substantiate this legislation or indeed to lay blame on a significant proportion on dog owners that would justify such a Carte Blanche approach to this issue

Objection 126

Hello

I would like to respond to your consultation I grew up in the glens and still visit my mother. We regularly take our dogs for walks round the coast.

I think it is a bit short sighted to ban dogs outright.

I understand the farmers frustration but your council is one of the least dog friendly in Northern Ireland.

Dogs are wonderful for mental health considering the past three years of lockdowns and isolation. They are also used to search and enable the blind to see Please consider stepping up patrols and fining those with uncontrolled animals rather than punishing everyone.

Objection 127

Hi

I am writing to you today to share with you my strong objections to the plans in stopping dog walking around Ballintoy and Whitepark Bay I walk my dog frequently in that area always on a leash. I cannot see the harm of dogs are on their lead to both the environment and the land. If on a lead they are safely secured and therefore no risk to any other dog or farm animals Having being in the medical field for 46 years I know the importance to one's health the pleasure being outdoors both for mental and physical well-being I hope this does not go ahead and please table my motion
Regards Sandra Kelso

Objection 128

I oppose the Balintoy to Whitepark Bay Dog Ban .

Council itself has provided a compelling case against such a ban in the quotations from its own report set out below

“Monitoring was undertaken during a period when there was potential for increased use by the public and their dogs in good weather.

Monitoring was carried out on weekdays from 29th April to 27th May 2022. In total 10 monitoring visits of monitoring was carried out at the lands in question. In order for an offence to be committed under Regulation 25 of the Dogs (NI) Order 1983 livestock must be present on the land in question and dogs must be off leash and not under control. In summary the findings are:

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The complainant provided a witness statement confirming their general complaint of the land being used by dog owners but there are no specific details of number of incidents of dogs attacking livestock, no details of numbers of livestock lost and no veterinary evidence of treatment of livestock following dog attacks.

Considerations for Council

- There already exists legislation whereby dogs must be under control by means of a leash on lands where livestock is present.
- The relevant guidance requires that the introduction of any Dog Control Order must be justified.
- Councils must take into account the interests of dog owners to be able to exercise their dogs without undue restrictions.
- Any proposed Dog Control Order must have a public consultation and the responses from this consultation such as objections to the Dog Control Order must be considered.
- The introduction of any Dog Control Order is subject to legal challenge and may fail if Council cannot demonstrate that such an Order is required and justified.
- The Environmental Health Department have NO recorded complaints of any incidents of dogs worrying livestock on these lands.
- From the total of 47 monitoring visits undertaken by the Enforcement Team NO relevant offences were detected.
- The witness statement by the complainant does NOT provide any supporting evidence in relation to the complaint.

Recommendation

It is recommended that members of the Environmental Services Committee make a recommendation to Council that Council does not progress the procedure to introduce a Dog Control Order excluding dogs from these lands."

Minutes meeting Council 22 June 2022

Objection 129

I am in total disagreement about this ban. We regularly visit Ballintoy and stay in dog friendly accommodation there. I live in a farming community and understand the concerns but to just apply a blanket ban seems extreme. Surely we could have 'dogs must be on leads'.

It seems strange, when so many businesses are providing dog friendly accommodations and have recognised the value of the doggy£, that the council is taking steps to ban dogs from a very popular area.

If our wee dog isn't welcome somewhere we just don't go.

Objection 130

I am wholly opposed to the dog ban from Ballintoy to Whitepark Bay. To many people dogs are family and it seems excessive to punish all for the actions of a few.

Most dog owners clean up after their pets and ensure they are well behaved around others.

I think his ban is totally unnecessary

Objection 131

This is ridiculous. You will drive dog owners away from your area. It's been proven to be lies why would anyone be considering this. I spend weeks in the area in the course of a year with my 2 shih tzu. Me alone I would depend about £4000 per year on shops, accommodation, food, restaurants etc in your area alone. It's absolute lunacy , it can't go ahead, but if it does I will never ever be back.

Objection 132

Dear Sir/Madam,

It's with real sadness that I read this is even a proposal. As a local to Whitepark Bay who walks the beach and surrounding area almost every day with 2 dogs I am very opposed to this idea. I am requesting that this Order does not come into effect. It is the local dog walkers who constantly maintain this area by daily collecting the rubbish that is left behind by visitors particularly during the summer months. Local dog walkers collect the tin foil bbq trays, coffee cups, beer can etc and leave in the bin areas for collection. I have walked often the area where you are considering this ban and i have never seen any problems with dogs and livestock. The animals, when they are there, are all very respectful of each other. Also, there are periods of time when there is no livestock in this area at all.

Please do do let the complaint of 1 individual have a terrible affect on so many more. We need our dog friendly visitors to visit all areas of the North Coast more than ever.

Objection 133

Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing to voice my objection to the banning of dogs at Balintoy Harbour. It would appear this has been pre agreed without any real public input.

I strongly object to this and want my name counted along with being notified of any decisions.

Objection 134

I am against this proposal banning dogs from the coastal path.

Furthermore I wish to state that there should be greater control of cats in the wider Council area. There needs to be more powers to prevent cats fouling in gardens and in public places

Objection 135

Dear Sir / Madam

Regarding the Council's consultation on the proposed dog control order on the path between Ballintoy and Whitepark Bay,

I am responding to say that I do not agree with the proposed dog control order.

As a regular visitor to the area for many years, I have often enjoyed walking along this path with my well behaved, on-lead dogs.

It would be totally unfair to deny responsible dog owners like myself access to this path.

I will expect confirmation of your receipt of this email so I know that my objections to the proposals have been recorded.

Objection 136

With regards to the consultation for the above proposed Dog exclusion order.

I wish to lodge my objection to this proposed dog exclusion order. I have walked this route between Ballintoy to Whitepark Bay for over 60 years. I have had a dog as a pet for most of my life and have always taken my dog with me on a lead on this land. It is an established right of way as part of a coastal path route. It is particularly relevant to me as my parents live in the vicinity of Whitepark and I walk from my home on the Harbour Road Ballintoy.

It makes no logical sense to have an established coastal walking route from as far as Portballintrae to Ballintoy or indeed to Carrick a Rede which people do continually, all year round often with a dog, only to find that a section of the path is not traversable due to having a dog on a lead.

This path is on a part of the coast which is a widely promoted tourist attraction for visitors as well as a pleasure for local residents to enjoy.

The fact that it could have a section in the middle of it where dogs are excluded but either side of it dogs are allowed is illogical.

I understand that wardens/observers have visited this area and have not recorded any misbehaviour by a dog or it's owner and in fact all dogs were kept controlled and managed on their leads.

The landowner has had signs displayed of a threatening nature for some time so it is clear that a solution has to be found. I do not have the evidence of any attacks on livestock by dogs off their lead with their owner although any attacks are deplorable and should not happen. One solution maybe for the landowner to have adequate fencing for his livestock. Irrespective of that, most importantly there should be proper official Council signage for owners to keep their dogs on a lead and control them appropriately.

This order for dogs to be kept on a lead could and should be monitored by wardens/council staff with fixed penalty fines issued if anyone does not comply.

This would present this Council area as being welcoming to visitors and users of the path, dog owners in particular, and encourage a greater boost to the local economy.

Objection 137

Dear North Coast councillors,

One of the most beautiful places on earth -Ballintoy. We have walked our dogs here so there's no reason to try to stop this.

But 19 people who are supposed to be it's Guardians want to ban us from visiting with our dogs.

Please reply telling me why!

My family and friends love where we live ... We also promote tourism and everyone will be shocked to hear what you, the Causeway Coast & Glens are trying to do!

Your own experts say this ban is not justified!

As per quote;

"- The Environmental Health Department have NO recorded complaints of any incidents of dogs worrying livestock on these lands.

- From the total of 47 monitoring visits undertaken by the Enforcement Team NO relevant offences were detected.

- The witness statement by the complainant does NOT provide any supporting evidence in relation to the complaint.

Recommendation

It is recommended that members of the Environmental Services Committee make a recommendation to Council that Council does not progress the procedure to introduce a Dog Control Order excluding dogs from these lands."

Minutes meeting Council 22 June 2022

Why have 19 Councillors ignored this advice and voted to go ahead anyway?

Please respond with positive news as soon as possible!

Objection 138

I wish to comment on the Public Consultation on the proposal to the introduction of the above Order.

My partner's family owns a property on Harbour Road, Ballintoy and I have been a regular visitor to the area for nearly 5 years. My partner, her family and I have looked after the surrounding area and protected it on every visit with litter picks and cleanups of the surrounding lands and beaches. I feel it important to note that we have never seen any dogs anywhere within this land proposed for this order, causing any hassle. We have not seen any evidence of dogs having been there, nor have we seen any near the sheep that teeter on the edge of those cliffs they are kept on. However, I have seen plenty of the land owners' sheep having fallen from the cliffs and lying in the middle of a Public Right of Way. Perhaps a focus should be redirected to protecting his animals better from the land conditions he has placed them on.

I strenuously object to the Dog Control Order proposal for the following reasons:

- There is no supporting evidence to uphold the proposal
- Responsible dog-owners are being unfairly penalised
- It's a Public Right of Way
- Disgusting use of language on signage and that better not be recorded on a CCTV camera. You'd need that signposted too. What does that say to tourists? Quite detrimental I am sure
- Waste of tax-payers money
- Conflict of Interest as some council members are connected to this land through family ties. I would not be impressed if that narrative of your council spoke of personal favors instead of dealing with important issues that your constituents actually want. Who are you working for?

Trusting this proposal will not proceed.

Objection 139

I oppose the Balintoy to Whitepark Bay Dog Ban .

Council itself has provided a compelling case against such a ban in the quotations from its own report set out below

“Monitoring was undertaken during a period when there was potential for increased use by the public and their dogs in good weather.

Monitoring was carried out on weekdays from 29th April to 27th May 2022. In total 10 monitoring visits of monitoring was carried out at the lands in question. In order for an offence to be committed under Regulation 25 of the Dogs (NI) Order 1983 livestock must be present on the land in question and dogs must be off leash and not under control. In summary the findings are:

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The complainant provided a witness statement confirming their general complaint of the land being used by dog owners but there are no specific details of number of incidents of dogs attacking livestock, no details of numbers of livestock lost and no veterinary evidence of treatment of livestock following dog attacks.

Considerations for Council

- There already exists legislation whereby dogs must be under control by means of a leash on lands where livestock is present.
- The relevant guidance requires that the introduction of any Dog Control Order must be justified.
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- The Environmental Health Department have NO recorded complaints of any incidents of dogs worrying livestock on these lands.
- From the total of 47 monitoring visits undertaken by the Enforcement Team NO relevant offences were detected.
- The witness statement by the complainant does NOT provide any supporting evidence in relation to the complaint.

Recommendation

It is recommended that members of the Environmental Services Committee make a recommendation to Council that Council does not progress the procedure to introduce a Dog Control Order excluding dogs from these lands.”

Minutes meeting Council 14 June 2022

Objection 140

As a local rate payer I am opposed to the to introduction of this order as I regular user of this path I was horrified to see the signs this Landowner erected threatening to shoot dogs on sight even on a lead putting owners life's at risk hopefully the order could be amended to ban dogs from roming free and requiring owners to keep dogs on a lead

Objection 141

I oppose the Ballintoy to Whitepark Bay Dog Ban .

Council itself has provided a compelling case against such a ban in the quotations from its own report set out below

“Monitoring was undertaken during a period when there was potential for increased use by the public and their dogs in good weather.

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Recommendation

It is recommended that members of the Environmental Services Committee make a recommendation to Council that Council does not progress the procedure to introduce a Dog Control Order excluding dogs from these lands."

Minutes meeting Council 22 June 2022

I am happy to keep my dog on a lead. No problem Landowners don't want people on their land . No evidence to support ban.

Bin this ban NOW

Objection 142

I oppose the Ballintoy to Whitepark Bay Dog Ban .

Council itself has provided a compelling case against such a ban in the quotations from its own report set out below

“Monitoring was undertaken during a period when there was potential for increased use by the public and their dogs in good weather.

Monitoring was carried out on weekdays from 29th April to 27th May 2022. In total 10 monitoring visits of monitoring was carried out at the lands in question. In order for an offence to be committed under Regulation 25 of the Dogs (NI) Order 1983 livestock must be present on the land in question and dogs must be off leash and not under control. In summary the findings are:

- Of the 10 visits NO offences were detected whereby livestock was present and dogs were off leash

A previous monitoring exercise was carried out by officers from the Enforcement Team and the Senior Environmental Health Officer for Enforcement during the week and at weekends from 31st January to 22nd February 2022. In summary the findings were:

- Of the 37 visits NO offences were detected whereby livestock was present and dogs were off leash

Environmental Services engaged with the person who made the request for the Dog Control Order to provide a written witness statement indicating the extent of the problem in their experience and to provide supplementary evidence to support any losses incurred such as veterinary records.

The complainant provided a witness statement confirming their general complaint of the land being used by dog owners but there are no specific details of number of incidents of dogs attacking livestock, no details of numbers of livestock lost and no veterinary evidence of treatment of livestock following dog attacks.

Considerations for Council

- There already exists legislation whereby dogs must be under control by means of a leash on lands where livestock is present:

- The relevant guidance requires that the introduction of any Dog Control Order must be justified.

- Councils must take into account the interests of dog owners to be able to exercise their dogs without undue restrictions.

- Any proposed Dog Control Order must have a public consultation and the responses from this consultation such as objections to the Dog Control Order must be considered.

- The introduction of any Dog Control Order is subject to legal challenge and may fail if Council cannot demonstrate that such an Order is required and justified.

- The Environmental Health Department have NO recorded complaints of any incidents of dogs worrying livestock on these lands.

- From the total of 47 monitoring visits undertaken by the Enforcement Team NO relevant offences were detected.

- The witness statement by the complainant does NOT provide any supporting evidence in relation to the complaint.

Recommendation

It is recommended that members of the Environmental Services Committee make a recommendation to Council that Council does not progress the procedure to introduce a Dog Control Order excluding dogs from these lands.”

Minutes meeting Council 22 June 2022

I am happy to keep my dog on a lead. No problem Landowners don't want

people on their land . No evidence to support ban.

Bin this ban NOW

Objection 143

I oppose the Ballintoy to Whitepark Bay Dog Ban .

Council itself has provided a compelling case against such a ban in the quotations from its own report set out below

“Monitoring was undertaken during a period when there was potential for increased use by the public and their dogs in good weather.

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- The relevant guidance requires that the introduction of any Dog Control Order must be justified.

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- The introduction of any Dog Control Order is subject to legal challenge and may fail if Council cannot demonstrate that such an Order is required and justified.

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Minutes meeting Council 22 June 2022

I am happy to keep my dog on a lead. No problem Landowners don't want people on their land . No evidence to support ban.

Bin this ban NOW

Objection 144

Dear Sirs

I wish to register my opposition to the aforementioned ban , on the grounds that the basis for a ban has not been able to be substantiated and the ban is therefore not required.

Objection 145

I oppose the Balintoy to Whitepark Bay Dog Ban .

Council itself has provided a compelling case against such a ban in the quotations from its own report set out below

"Monitoring was undertaken during a period when there was potential for increased use by the public and their dogs in good weather.

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- The relevant guidance requires that the introduction of any Dog Control Order must be justified.
- Councils must take into account the interests of dog owners to be able to exercise their dogs without undue restrictions.
- Any proposed Dog Control Order must have a public consultation and the responses from this consultation such as objections to the Dog Control Order must be considered.
- The introduction of any Dog Control Order is subject to legal challenge and may fail if Council cannot demonstrate that such an Order is required and justified.
- The Environmental Health Department have NO recorded complaints of any incidents of dogs worrying livestock on these lands.
- From the total of 47 monitoring visits undertaken by the Enforcement Team NO relevant offences were detected.
- The witness statement by the complainant does NOT provide any supporting evidence in relation to the complaint.

Recommendation

It is recommended that members of the Environmental Services Committee make a recommendation to Council that Council does not progress the procedure to introduce a Dog Control Order excluding dogs from these lands."

Minutes meeting Council 22 June 2022

Objection 146

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Considerations for Council

- There already exists legislation whereby dogs must be under control by means of a leash on lands where livestock is present.
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- The witness statement by the complainant does NOT provide any supporting evidence in relation to the complaint.

Recommendation

It is recommended that members of the Environmental Services Committee make a recommendation to Council that Council does not progress the procedure to introduce a Dog Control Order excluding dogs from these lands."

Minutes meeting Council 22 June 2022

Bin this ban NOW!!!

Objection 147

As I understand it there is a proposal to ban dogs from the costal walk between Ballintoy and Whitepark Bay. This is as you are aware a public right of way and this proposal has come about from the complaint of one land owner who claimed uncontrolled dogs attacked his livestock in this area.

I would like to state the following as I understand it:-

1. No evidence has been submitted to back up this Land Owners claims
2. There were 47 site visits by council staff with no offences witnessed
3. An elected member made two visits where three dogs were observed off the lead. No offences disclosed.
4. Due to points 1-3 above there is no grounds which would justify a Dog Control Order
5. The consultation process is likely to cost the council money and if passed this order could easily be set aside by way of judicial review
6. If dogs are attacking livestock there already exists legislation to deal with this under The Dogs (NI) Order 1983 and The Dogs (Amendment Act 2011). A summary of this legislation can be found on the NI Direct website.
7. This area depends on tourism and yet this council seems determined to undermine the dog friendly tourism industry.

In view of the above seven points I would like to point out that introduction of any Dog Control Order must be justified and required which clearly is not the case. The rights of dog owners to exercise their dogs without undue restrictions must be taken into consideration.

Objection 148

Good Day, re dog walking
Dog Exclusion Ballintoy to
Whiteport Bay.

Well the council
has spent a fortune over a
man who had no evidence.
Why should dogs and owners
suffer. Saying that it
would be safer to keep the
dog on a lead if close to
cows sheep etc and off
on the beach.

Has the council
worked out how it will
pay to police such a daft
policy i.e. no dogs;

Objection 149

I love to visit the area and it is a shame that people with dogs are being discriminated against in this way. Make the rule that dogs must be on leads. What an absolutely archaic order. Dog owners across Ireland and the UK are enjoying including their pets in their daily lives with things becoming more pet friendly. More people than ever own dogs, they are part of families. Please reconsider.

Comments on proposed Dogs Exclusion Order: -

Dear Sirs

DOG CONTROL ORDER – DOGS EXCLUSION (LANDS AT BALLINTOY TO WHITEPARK BAY) (2023) – REPRESENTATION

Having seen and read the proposals to exclude dogs all year round along the public right of way through lands from Ballintoy to Whitepark Bay, I would like to make representation against the proposals.

This right of way is a popular walk for both locals and tourists, many of whom walk it with their dogs. I appreciate that there have been concerns as to dog fouling and animals being out of control, but I do not believe that an outright ban excluding dogs all year round is the way ahead. It is, in my opinion a measure of last resort and should not be applied to this popular route.

I would therefore ask the council not to introduce such an exclusion.

I appreciate that there are conflicting interests, not least from those who farm and have livestock grazing along this route, but I believe an outright ban would adversely affect dog owning public access and enjoyment of this important part of the North Coast.

I believe that it would be better served if a set of less draconian measures were introduced and/or enforced, such as:

- a. All dogs, at all times, are required to be kept on a leash along this route.
- b. That walkers accompanied by their dogs using this route are required to clear up any dog fouling by their dogs. (This may be enhanced with the provision of dog foul collection bins at suitable locations).
- c. That dogs may be excluded for specific periods such as the lambing season, but not banned all year round.

- d. That Council Dog Wardens be tasked to frequently monitor this area to ensure enforcement of the suggestions outlined above, (should they be accepted).
- e. That fixed penalties (fines) be applicable and rigorously applied for non-compliance by dog owners /walkers.

I would also ask the council to consider introducing similar regulations along the Causeway Coast/Ulster Way route along White Park Bay, including the path from the White Park Bay car park through the dunes to White Park Bay beach.



Appendix 3 – Letters of Support

Letter of Support 1

In response to The Dogs Exclusion (Lands at Ballintoy to Whitepark Bay) Order 2023-

As a concerned member of the public, and a dog owner I wanted to voice my support for this Order being put in place to protect not only local agricultural animals but also to keep the area clean and free from dog mess. As usual a few irresponsible dog owners feel the need to ignore signs and let their dogs run loose across this area. It is an area which many people enjoy walks and with the sheltered rocky shore line it is also popular for water sports such as kayaking and paddle boarding. Dog mess is not only dangerous but many of the dogs off leads are not under full control of their owners. My mum has a fear of dogs and on more than one occasion has been jumped on by loose, out of control dogs while their owners are completely unaware.

I am glad to see the council taking this further and can there have are now beautiful areas along the North Coast which are now cleaner and safer with the introduction of similar orders.

Letter of Support 2

Dogs should not be permitted in areas with livestock at all. There needs to be proper limits to where dogs are allowed and those refusing to adhere to rules need to be held accountable for non compliance. All dogs need to be kept on leads at all times whether in an area where other animals are present or not. All too often uncontrolled dogs are a menace to both livestock and other members of the public who are not comfortable around dogs and whose owners seem oblivious or simply don't understand the stress and anxiety caused to others. Much needs changed regarding uncontrolled dogs in all situations both for the safety of livestock and other walkers trying to enjoy time out without being subjected to dogs running and jumping up on them when this can be a very frightening situation for others. Unfortunately we constantly see dog owners ignoring signs where their dogs are not permitted and letting them onto picnic tables and seats where people are going to eat. Therefore I agree that there should certainly be a Dog Control Order in this instance for the safety of livestock.

Letter of Support – 3

Good afternoon

Dogs should be banned from all beaches on the North Coast and they should be on leads in all public places. Society is being overrun with dogs.

Comments on proposed Dogs Exclusion Order: -

I am a landowner farming to the west of
Whitgate Bay.

Our farm accommodates people and dog walking
through some of our land.

The pathways and sign posts are well documented
by the Council, unfortunately a minority of
unscrupulous dog owners do not adhere to keeping
their dogs on leads.

I have instances of dogs chasing and attacking my sheep
I am constantly trying to educate people on the dangers of
not keeping their dogs on leads.

Unfortunately there is a herdsmen which just won't listen.

I wholeheartedly support the proposal of no dogs at Ballintoy.

However I feel that unless this proposal is extended.

further west of Ballintoy more inprincipled dog owners will
swamp in larger numbers over my land causing my livelihood
to be severely affected.