

## Comments on the Kennel Club Burnham Beeches Survey

I have been asked for comments on the Burnham Beeches survey of dog walkers, produced by the Kennel Club:

<http://www.burnhamdogwalkers.org.uk/>

I can't comment on how the survey is being circulated/promoted, but in order to in any way capture balanced views from a random selection of dog walkers it would be essential that the survey was not distributed alongside any hostile/negative/exaggerated claims about the proposed DCOs.

Page 1: The introductory text is very strongly worded and leads the respondent to a particular viewpoint. The text is written in such a way that the reader will form a negative opinion of the Corporation of London and the proposed measures, and the wording also clearly is likely to make people want to respond angrily and in a particular way. This effect is created immediately with the title ("off-lead ban") which appears throughout and is emotive.

The introduction states that the aim of the questionnaire is to "show the Corporation's decision-makers how .... Unpopular their off-lead ban will be".

Page 2: Response order would ideally be randomised. This applies to many of the questions, where there are categories in a set order. For example in question 5 the order is such that the highest value is most likely to be ticked.

Page 3: Question 3. It is not easy to understand the area in which off-lead dog walking will be allowed. A map would have been more appropriate.

The list of statements is biased and very negative. Ideally there would be a mix of positive and negative statements. The strongly agree button is closest to the statements and therefore the one most likely to be clicked in all cases.

The statements link to the view already heavily promoted in the introduction just two clicks previous: for example the introductory text states that measures are unjustified - people are likely to start completing the questionnaire with that in mind - and then they are asked whether they agree or not that "restricting all dogs in this way is unjustified", something they have already been told.

Page 4, question 4: not clear what the star means (subsequent clicks show that it reflects routed questions)

The offer of an incentive (tickets to events) means that individuals may respond multiple times and may get relatives etc to respond. This is likely to inflate the number of responses.

The final page makes it clear that the survey will be used to challenge the Corporation of London, it again makes strongly leading statements and then asks that the link is circulated to other dog walkers (which would suggest that it will be further circulated by people that have been stirred up by the wording).

In summary the survey is clearly designed to lead responses to a particular view and only to gather responses from people likely to provide such a view. The survey is promoted to gain as many responses as possible, rather than to simply gather responses from individuals who have a particular viewpoint.

Durwyn Liley, 9<sup>th</sup> June 2014