



**Environmental Health**

**Martin Holt**

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**Head of Health & Housing**  
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Dear Mr Barnard

**Re: Dog Control Orders proposed for Burnham Beeches**

I am writing on behalf of the Cabinet Member for Health and Housing, as you are aware following the committee meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2014 members are broadly supportive of the introduction of a form of Dog Control Orders at the Beeches but have a number of reservations relating to the current proposals.

In their current form we believe that the proposed controls will adversely affect local people who have been walking their dogs responsibly at Burnham Beeches for many years. They will also put more pressure on other sites for dog walkers displaced because of the restrictions placed on them.

The cabinet member for Health and Housing whilst wishing to support the Corporations aims is unable to support the proposals outlined.

Specifically we can support the controls in Schedules 1, 3 and 4 which are in line with responsible management and national guidance, and there is some support for the limit on numbers of dogs proposed in schedule 5 while the specified number appears overly restrictive and flexibility is urged.

The reservations expressed relate specifically to:

**Schedule 2.** Not keeping a dog on a lead (max length of lead 5m) will apply in areas marked by the red boundary i.e. up to 130ha.

While proportionately delivered Dog Control Orders can help to encourage responsible ownership and help to minimise the occurrence of the dangerous and nuisance dog related incidents, a blanket control of this kind will not simply target irresponsible dog owners but will impose additional controls over the majority of site users who attend with dogs and who behave responsibly.

The size of the area designated in schedule 2 seems to be too large and without full consideration of all of the risks posed to either dog walkers, members of the public or the environmental impact. There are areas covered by the dogs on leads requirement which don't appear to fall into a risk category while other areas not covered are those more likely to lead to interaction between dogs, people and cars i.e where the risk of a dog related incident is effectively greatest.

A more proportionate approach would be to increase the size of the Schedule 3 area to at least include the disused roads and paths of the popular walks around Lord Mayors Drive and by the

lakes. Owners who are less responsible could still be targeted by requesting that nuisance dogs are properly controlled or placed on a lead.

There is a perception that the effect of this order will be to drive dog walkers away from Burnham Beeches who will then find alternative sites to walk their pets thus putting an extra strain on areas currently not regulated.

The concerns expressed above are that the requirement is out of proportion to the issues which have been identified and the Corporation is asked to review the details of the proposal which are causing community concern before introducing the order in its current form.

Additionally it is noted that the drawn map of the area covered extends across the public highway in a number of locations, therefore the proposed controls will cross over or exist directly adjacent to areas outside the control of the Corporation. If the control order is to be imposed on land which is part of the Beeches but outside the natural boundary of the highway how will it be managed and enforced and how will the information be clearly communicated to members of the public? There are a number of road junctions and private driveways around the site where there seems to be a real possibility for confusion and misinterpretation.

Yours Faithfully



David Gilmour  
Environmental Health Manager