

## Dog Control in Coventry Final Report: Findings from Public Consultation – November 2014

The Council conducted a wide reaching public consultation on the proposed introduction of further Dog Controls in the city and the extent to which these controls will be applied.

Members of the public could complete an on-line survey, request a hard copy of the survey or attend specific meetings which were set up specifically to discuss the proposed new Order.

Businesses and animal charities were emailed directly to inform them of the consultation and how to take part.

The following report indicates the headline results from each of the tick box questions where respondents were asked primarily whether they agreed or disagreed with 4 different proposed Dog Controls as well as analysis of all the comments from respondents who indicated they were not in agreement.

This final report will inform the Officer report to be presented to the Cabinet Member (Policing and Equalities) on December 18<sup>th</sup> 2014 and Cabinet on 6 January 2015, when the decision whether to implement further dog control measures within a Public Space Protection Order will be taken.

### **Response Rate**

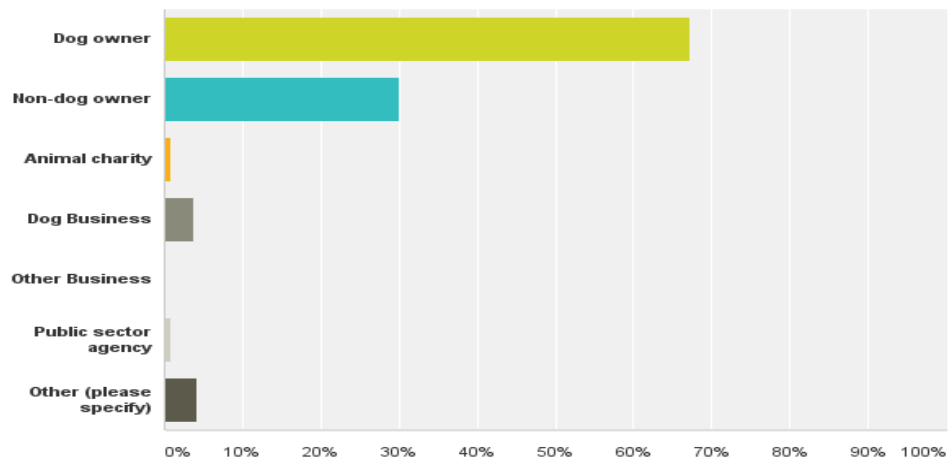
The survey ran from Monday 8th September to Sunday 12th October 2014.

1080 responses were received.

## Respondent Profile

### Q1 Are you responding as a:

Answered: 1,080 Skipped: 0



Just over two thirds of respondents were dog owners, the next largest group at 30% were non dog owners with businesses making up 4% of the responses. Respondents could tick more than one response therefore the percentages will add up to over 100%.

Answer Choices	Responses
Dog owner	<b>67.31%</b> 727
Non-dog owner	<b>30.00%</b> 324
Animal charity	<b>0.83%</b> 9
Business which specifically deals with dogs e.g. professional dog walkers, vets, boarding kennels, home boarders etc.	<b>3.70%</b> 40
Other commercial business	<b>0.09%</b> 1
Public sector agency	<b>0.74%</b> 8
Other (please specify)	<b>4.17%</b> 45
<b>Total Respondents: 1,080</b>	

The respondents were then asked whether they agreed or disagreed with specific Control Orders and, where applicable, those in agreement were then given choices of areas where they believed the Orders should be applied.

## 1. Do you believe that Coventry City Council should introduce a Dogs on Leads Order for specific areas of the city?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes - I agree	81.0%	857
No - I do not agree	19.0%	201
<i>answered question</i>		1058
<i>skipped question</i>		22

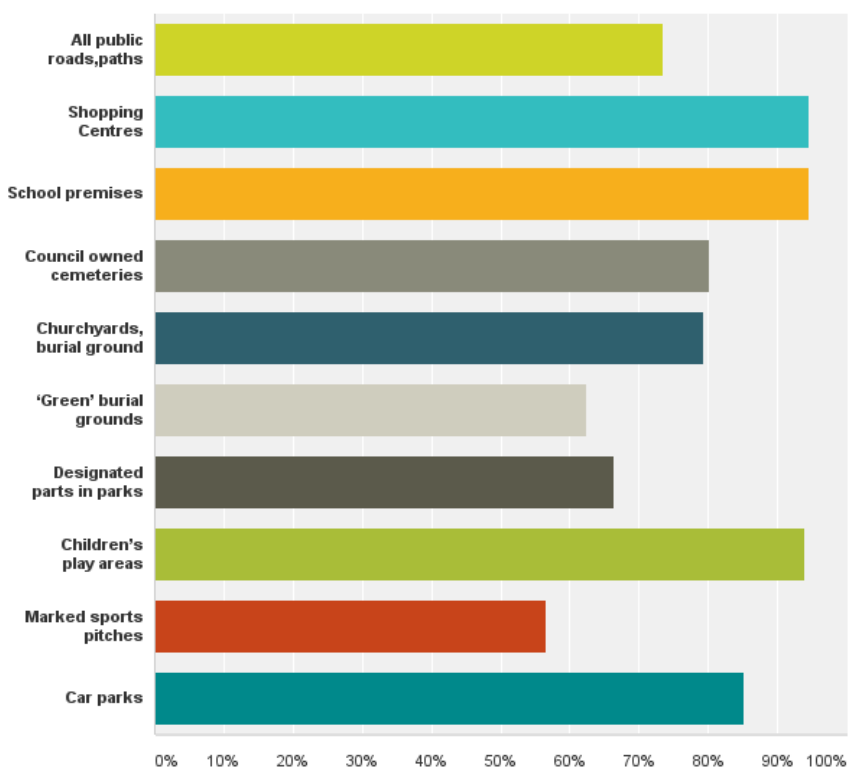
8 out of 10 respondents agreed with the introduction of a dogs on leads Order in certain areas of the city.

When asked where these Orders should apply, precincts/ shopping centres, school premises and children's play areas were the most popular choices. All areas where it was suggested this type of Order could apply had at least half of the total number of respondents indicating that the Order should apply there. The least popular choice was marked sports pitches.

Areas where respondents would like to see the introduction of a dogs on lead Order

### Q3 Areas Orders Should be Applied

Answered: 844 Skipped: 236

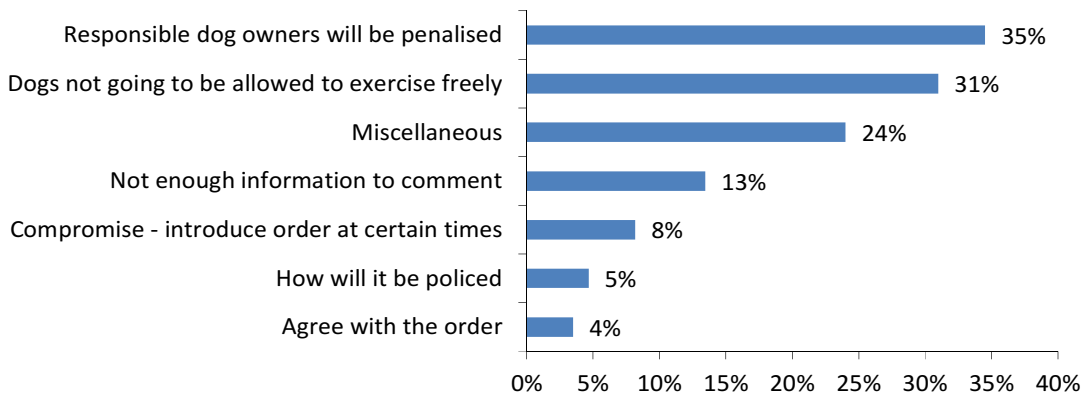


Respondents were given the opportunity to comment on why they did not agree with the introduction of a dogs on lead Order.

The chart below shows the comments by theme in most popular order – the percent will add up to more than 100% because individual comments may cover more than one theme.

In total 171 comments were made. A full list of comments is available on request

### Comments received by category



#### Disagree with Dogs on Lead Order

*“This will impact upon responsible dog owners who have well-behaved dogs. It would be better to have the powers to fine dog owners who's dogs are causing problems off the lead rather than having a blanket ban”*

*“All dogs have a need to have off lead exercise. If this is not allowed you will end up with dogs that are agitated and stressed”*

*“There are enough controls already ...education and support would be far more positive”*

**2. Do you agree that authorised Council officers should be granted powers to insist that an owner puts their dog on a lead?**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes - I agree	78.9%	816
No - I do not agree	21.1%	218
	<i>answered question</i>	<b>1034</b>
	<i>skipped question</i>	<b>46</b>

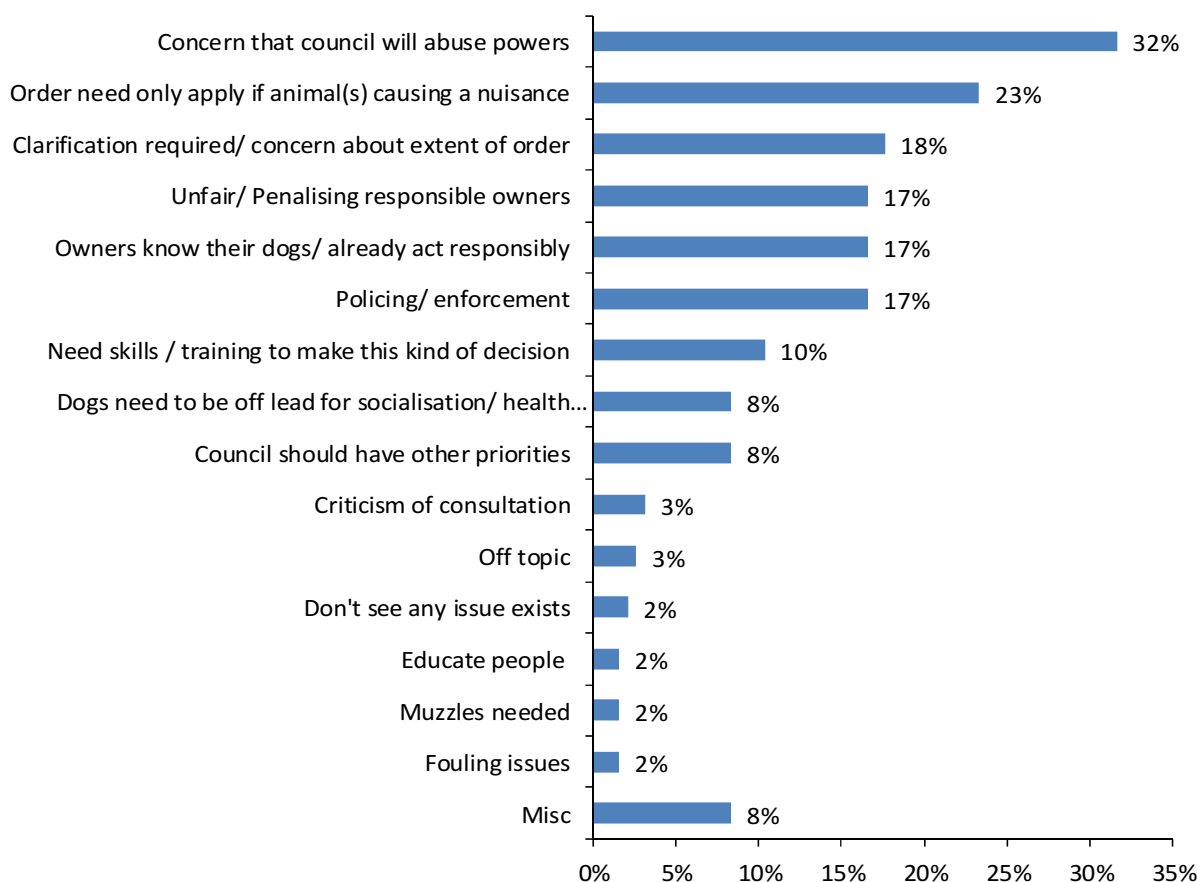
79% of respondents agreed with Council Officers being granted powers to insist that an owner puts their dog on a lead.

Respondents were given the opportunity to comment on why they did not agree with the introduction of council powers to enforce a dogs on lead Order.

The chart below shows the comments by theme in most popular order – the percentages will add up to more than 100% because individual comments may cover more than one theme.

In total 193 comments were made. A full list of comments is available on request

### Comments received by theme



### Disagree with Dogs on Lead Order by Council Enforcement

*"It could be open to abuse... I do not feel that ALL council officers would be able to use discretion when a dog is causing a nuisance or not. I feel there would be a blanket rule, borne out of one bad owner spoiling it for the many. It would be a quick way unethical way to build up revenue too."*

*"I do agree in theory that if a dog was causing a nuisance and not under control, the owner should be asked to put it on a lead. But I fail to see how this could be enforced by an Authorised Officer (AO). The irresponsible person, who allows their dog to cause a nuisance, is unlikely to listen to an AO, or do what the AO tells them. They are also unlikely to pay any fine or to give a correct name and address."*

*"Responsible dog owners know when to put their dogs on a lead."*

**3. Do you agree that authorised Council officers should be able to restrict owners from taking their dogs into certain places which are clearly signed?**

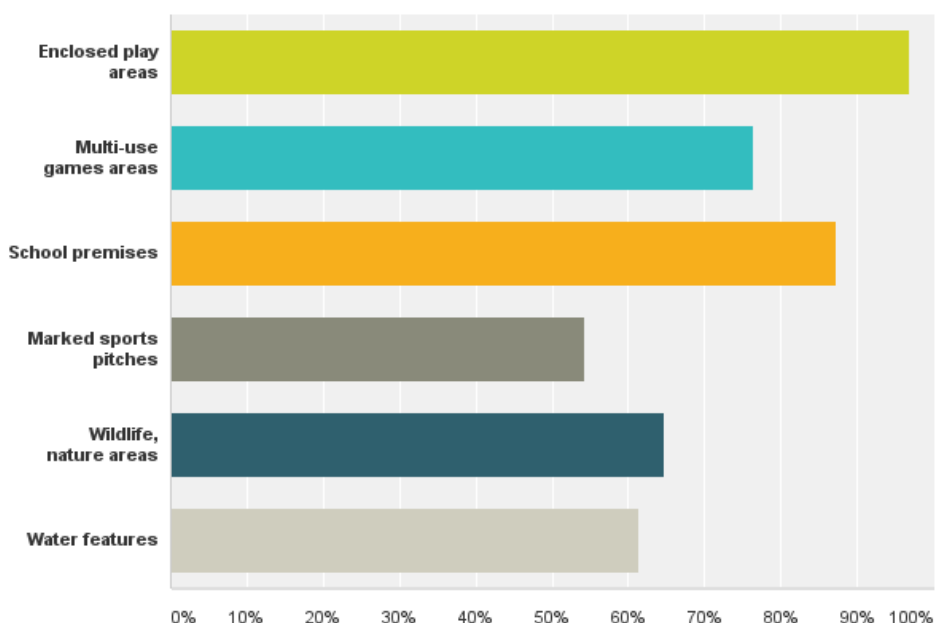
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes - I agree	80.6%	815
No - I do not agree	19.4%	196
<i>answered question</i>		1011
<i>skipped question</i>		69

Again 8 out of 10 respondents agreed with this proposed Order.

The chart below shows where respondents feel that restrictions should be put in place.

**Q8 Areas where Orders Should be Applied**

Answered: 812 Skipped: 268



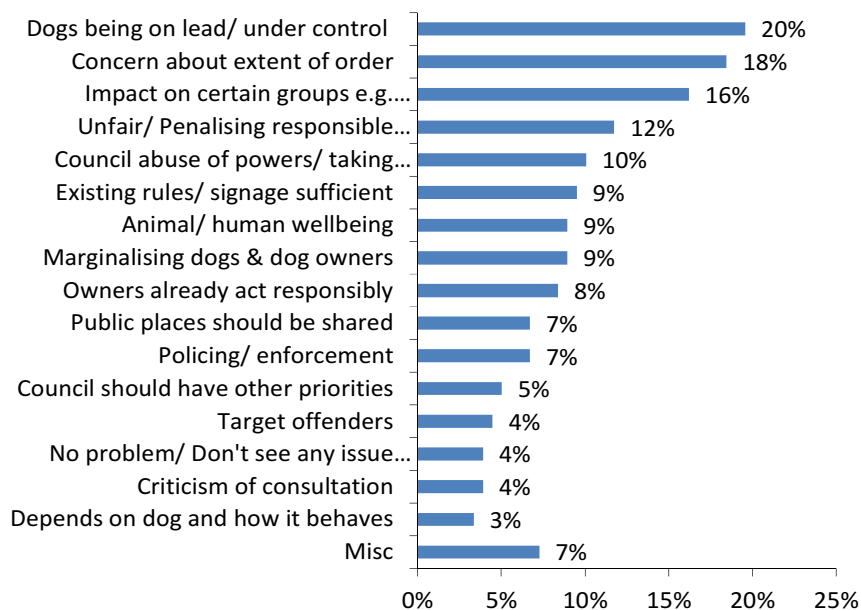
97% of respondents feel that dogs should not be allowed in enclosed children’s play areas.

Respondents were given the opportunity to comment on why they did not agree with the introduction of a restriction on places dogs can go.

The chart below shows the comments by theme in most popular order – the percentages will add up to more than 100% because individual comments may cover more than one theme.

In total 179 comments were made. A full list of comments is available on request

### Comments received by theme



#### Disagree with Restrictions on Places Dogs can go

*“As a responsible dog owner I am capable of exercising common sense, and abiding by any restriction notices. I do not need council officers to instruct me to do anything.”*

*“A dog under control (on a lead) should be able to accompany it's owner anywhere.”*

*“Is the Council going to provide dog crèche facilities when a family with a dog needs to use an area where there is a restriction order?”*

*“There are parts of the country that manage to be dog friendly without a problem. Many parts of the south west will allow you to take your dog in many places. For responsible dog owners, your dog(s) is part of the family. I think that so long as dogs are kept on leads in areas where there are children for example, they should be allowed access. A blanket ban is unnecessary and will only serve to ostracise responsible dog owners and well trained dogs.”*



**4. The Council proposes that a person should not be walking more than four dogs at any one time. Do you agree that the Council should be granted powers to introduce a ‘Dogs (Specified Maximum) on Land Order’?**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes - I agree	68.3%	690
No - I do not agree	31.7%	320
	<i>answered question</i>	1010
	<i>skipped question</i>	70

This proposal received the lowest number of responses in agreement out of all the 4 proposed Control Orders, although 68% of respondents were in favour of granting this order.

Respondents were given the opportunity to comment on why they did not agree with the introduction of a restriction on the number of dogs being walked at any one time.

The chart overleaf shows the comments by theme in most popular order – the percentages will add up to more than 100% because individual comments may cover more than one theme.

In total 307 comments were made. A full list of comments is available on request

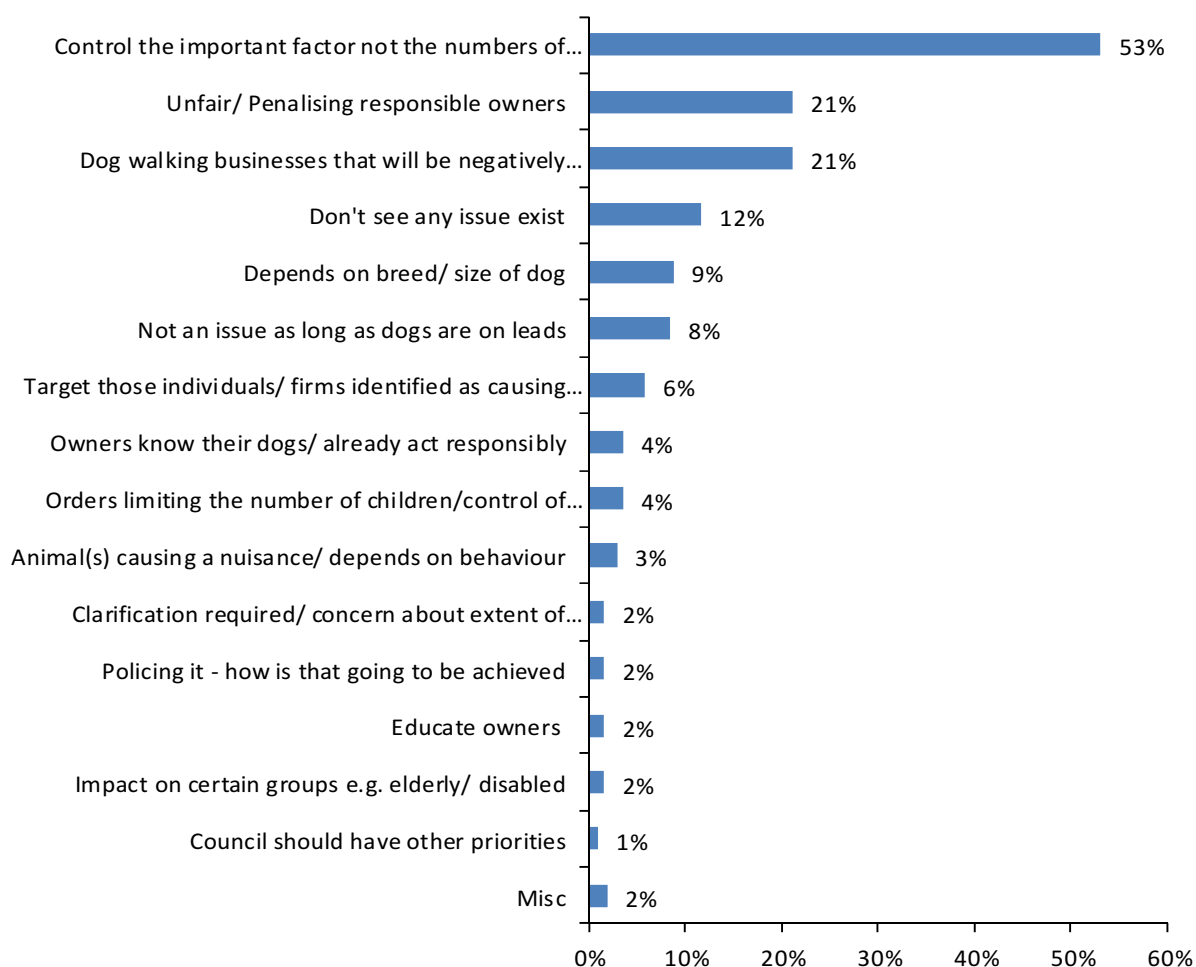
**Disagree with Restriction on the Number of Dogs**

*“1 or 10 dogs it doesn't matter if they are completely under control at all time. People will cause the problems not the dogs.”*

*“Again, this punishes responsible dog owners. For example, this would affect professional dog walkers - increasing their costs and possibly putting them out of business. Only responsible dog owners use professional dog walkers and these restrictions would make the cost of a good professional dog walker more expensive.”*

*“The majority of dog owners ARE responsible and if they are in control of their dogs, it really is no business of yours how many they are walking at a time. Will you be introducing similar restrictions on the amount of children one person can take to a restaurant or play area? I doubt it.”*

### Comments received by theme



In all cases the majority of respondents were in favour of the Control Orders being proposed.

The table below shows the views of the three main groups of respondents, being dog owners, non-dog owners and businesses which specifically deal with dogs.

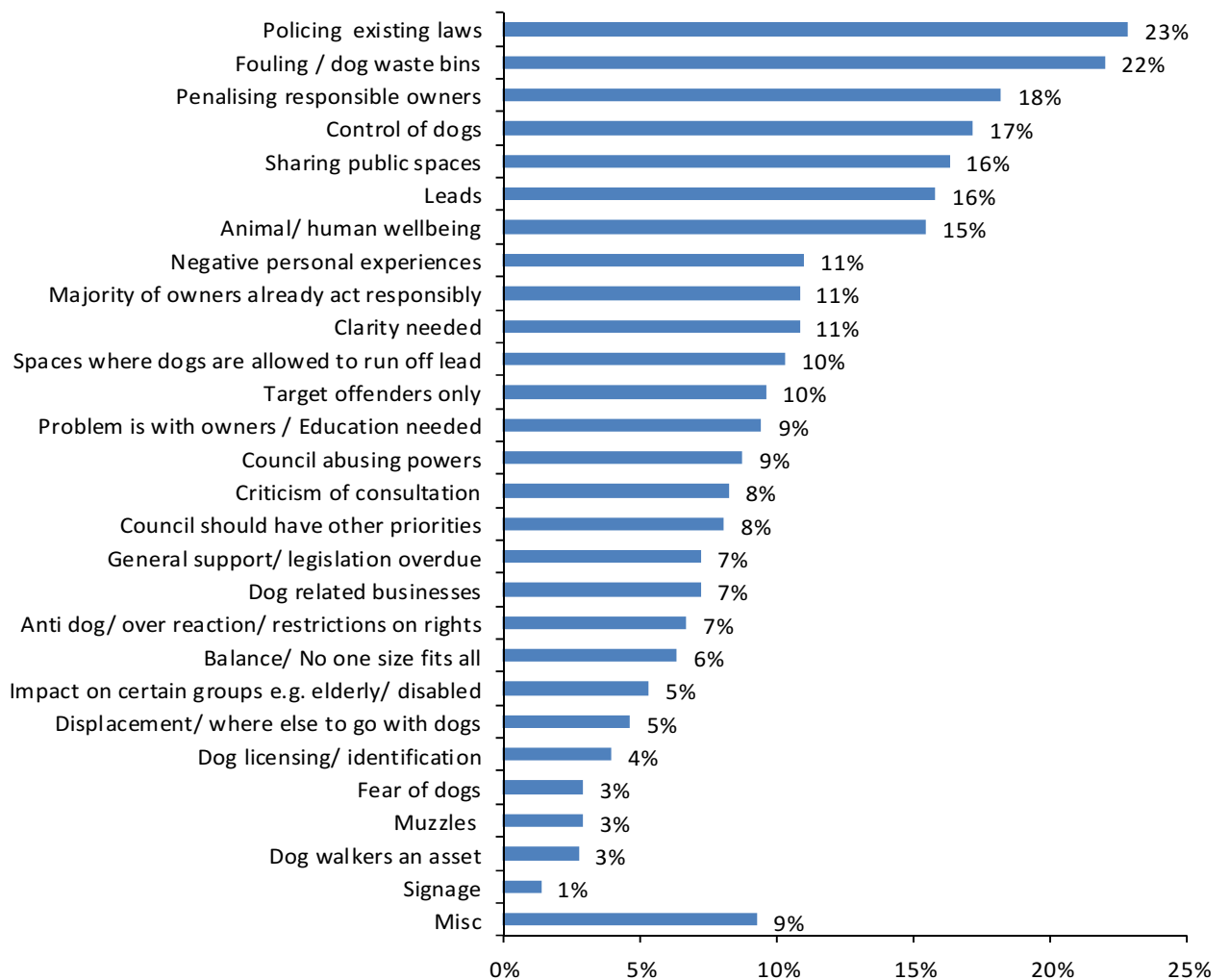
	Yes - I agree			
	Dog Owner	Non Dog Owner	Business	Overall survey response
1. Owners to keep dogs on a lead in specified places.	76%	92%	85%	81%
2. Owners to put dogs on a lead if instructed to do so	72%	92%	76%	79%
3. A restriction on owners taking dogs into certain places	74%	93%	86%	81%
4. A limit on the number of dogs a person has with them at any one time	61%	84%	65%	68%

A higher level of agreement was consistently found from respondents who were non-dog owners. Interestingly, businesses that deal with dogs tended to be more in favour of the proposals than respondents who are dog owners.

Finally respondents were given the chance to make any additional points or comments.

In total, 582 comments were made. A full list of comments is available on request

### Comments received by theme



### **Any other Comments**

*“Dogs should all be identifiable with ID tags (by law) so this should be enforced, and those guilty of being irresponsible penalised without blanket bans affecting everyone.”*

*“You seem to be giving council officers powers more akin to the police. Council officers do not necessarily have the skills, training or judgement. You provide no guidelines or examples of how this would be implemented or monitored so cannot be supported. As councils get smaller you may also be creating powers that may also never be enacted, raising unnecessary expectations.”*

*“I think the ideas and motivation for dog control orders are generally well founded but it is the practicalities of implementing them in a sensitive and sensible way in reality which I worry somewhat about. It would be useful to get advice and help from organisations such as the Dog's Trust and similar bodies and would also be very useful for any Authorised Officers if they were to be appointed to gain knowledge from them. Working together with police and PCSO's would also be beneficial.”*

*“I would rather pay some sort of license to say I'm a responsible owner and allowed to let my dogs off than be banned from places or made to keep my dogs on leads.”*

*“This is claiming all owners are the same when they clearly are not. I understand you're trying to control what goes on but it's not going to work. You can't make people pick up their own dogs mess so how do you think you're going to control this!?”*

*“I think the Council should be concentrating on dealing with people who can't control their dogs and make them have them on a lead. The Council also need to look at these dog walking companies that keep cropping up. Some of them have a great big group of dogs that just go wild.”*

