

# Item 1: Review of the Dog Control Policy and Bylaw

**SESSION TYPE:** Workshop

**PURPOSE/DESIRED OUTCOME:**

The purpose of this workshop is to provide elected members with an overview of the Dog Control Policy and Bylaw review underway. This will include background on both the policy and the bylaw, insights from early engagement and preliminary options for addressing key topics. Feedback is sought on Council's appetite for change across identified topics in order to refine the development of formal options as part of a draft bylaw and policy for public consultation later in 2026.

**DATE/START TIME:**

Tuesday, 28 April 2026 at 10.00am

**TIME BREAKDOWN:**

Presentation: 30 minutes approximately  
Questions or Debate/Discussion: 30 minutes approximately

**Prepared by:**



**Name:** Caitlin Pemberton  
**Title:** Policy Advisor  
14 April 2026

**Reviewed and Authorised by:**



**Name:** Katherine Harbrow  
**Title:** GM Finance, Risk and Assurance  
14 April 2026

**ATTACHMENTS:**

A	Dog Control Policy & Bylaw Review PowerPoint
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# Review of the Dog Control Policy and Bylaw

Council Workshop: 28 April 2026

# What we are seeking today

- > The Dog Control Act 1999 requires councils to adopt a Dog Control Policy and give effect to it through a Dog Control Bylaw. Together, these both establish how dogs are managed in public places across the district.
- > Early engagement was undertaken with the community, stakeholders and partner agencies to understand whether existing dog control policy settings remain fit for purpose and to identify any potential areas for change.
- > Today, we are seeking councillor feedback on:
  - > The list of issues raised through the review to-date.
  - > Appetite for change and the appropriate level of regulatory intervention in relation to each topic.
  - > Any additional topics or issues that councillors consider should be included as part of the review.

# The bylaw development process



# Context - How do the policy/bylaw fit together?

## Dog Control Act 1996 (the Act)

The primary legislation governing the ownership and management of dogs. Its purpose is to promote responsible dog ownership and ensure public safety.

## Dog Control Policy (the Policy)

All territorial authorities are required (by the Act) to adopt a dog control policy to promote public safety and responsible dog ownership in the district.

## Dog Control Bylaw (the Bylaw)

A territorial authority must give effect to the Policy by adopting a dog control bylaw. Section 20 of the Act allows for the prescription of a Dog Control Bylaw (in accordance with the Local Government Act 2002 (LGA)) and enable territorial authority to regulate and control dogs in any public place.

*On 21 March 2026, the Government announced it would commence a comprehensive review of the Act. It is currently in early-stages. QLDC's current bylaw must be replaced before June 2027, therefore staff must progress the review and adapt to any changes as required.*

# Current rules in QLDC's Policy and Bylaw

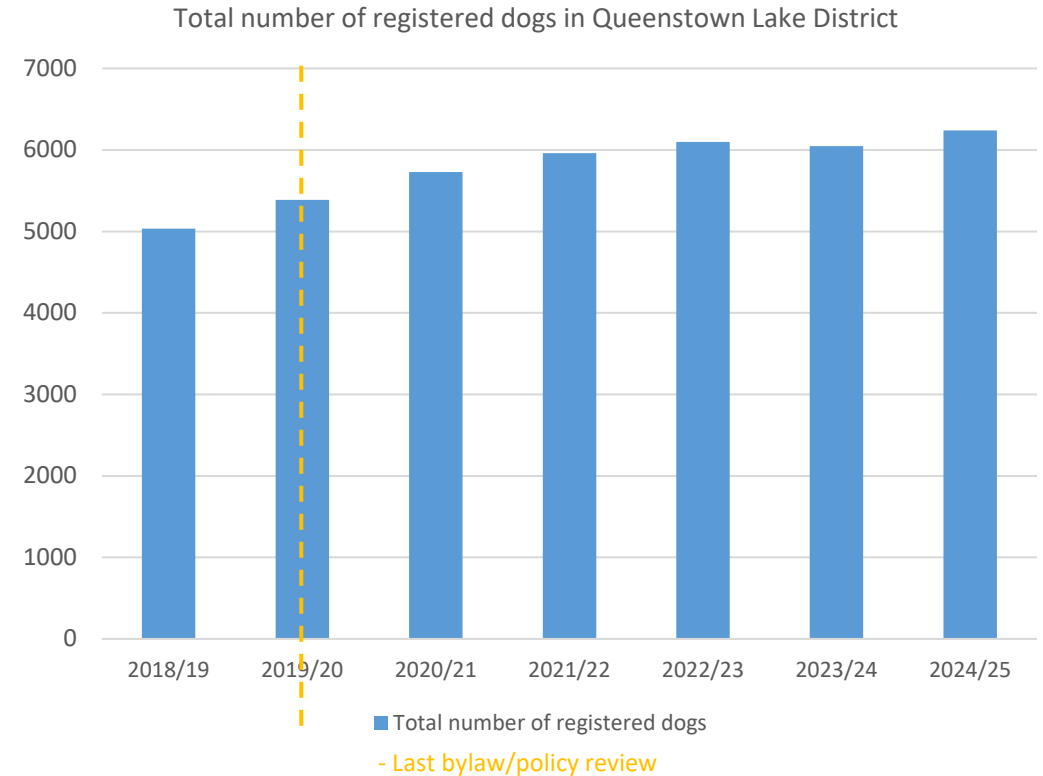
- > Public places where dogs are prohibited, where they may be exercised off-leash, and where they must be kept on-leash.
- > Dogs are permitted to be off leash across most reserves – permissive settings.
- > Any other public places dogs must be on a leash.
- > An owner may not keep more than two dogs, unless the owner holds a multiple dog license.
- > An owner must immediately collect dog waste from public place.
- > Any dog classified as menacing or dangerous (in accordance with the Act) must be neutered.

## Rules for dog access in current Policy and Bylaw

Dog access rule	Place
<b>Prohibited</b>	School grounds
	Queenstown Hill and Walkway
<b>Off leash (dog exercise area)</b>	All reserves (unless an exempted reserve, below)
<b>On leash</b>	Cemeteries
	Playgrounds and skateboarding facilities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Earnslaw Park,</li><li>• Marine Parade,</li><li>• Marine Parade Reserve,</li><li>• Queenstown Bay,</li><li>• Queenstown Gardens; and</li><li>• Matakauri Park</li><li>• Bremner Bay.</li></ul>
	Any other public place (i.e., public footpaths, town centres)

# Current dog population and control practices

- > There are 14% more registered dogs in the district (increase from 5728 to 6240 dogs).
- > There are 34 owners with Multiple Dog Licenses.
- > The total number of dangerous dogs and menacing dogs in the district has remained consistent approximately:
  - > 3-4 dogs classified as dangerous (has posed a threat).
  - > 13 dogs classified as menacing (may pose a threat).
- > Animal control team follows graduated enforcement approach - proactive engagement and education through to appropriate enforcement.
- > Most common issue and ongoing focus is responding to roaming and barking dog complaints.

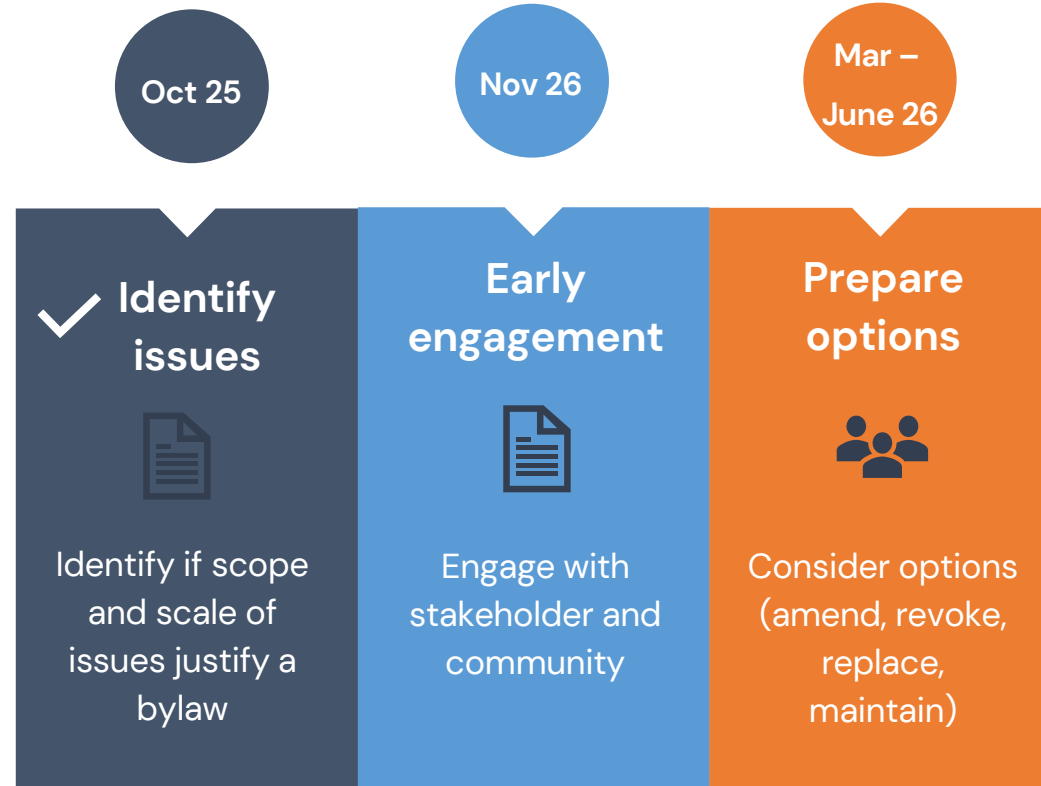


# Context – a growing and changing district

- > Significant growth since the last bylaw review. The total population was 47,100, now it is over 53,800. This means
  - > growing urban areas; and,
  - > more people and dogs in public places.
- > Growth will continue.
- > More trails and reserves, some reserves have been vested to Council.
- > QLDC Climate and Biodiversity Plan 2025–2028 was recently adopted and places a strong emphasis the protection, restoration and management of indigenous biodiversity.

# Early engagement overview

# Who have we engaged with?

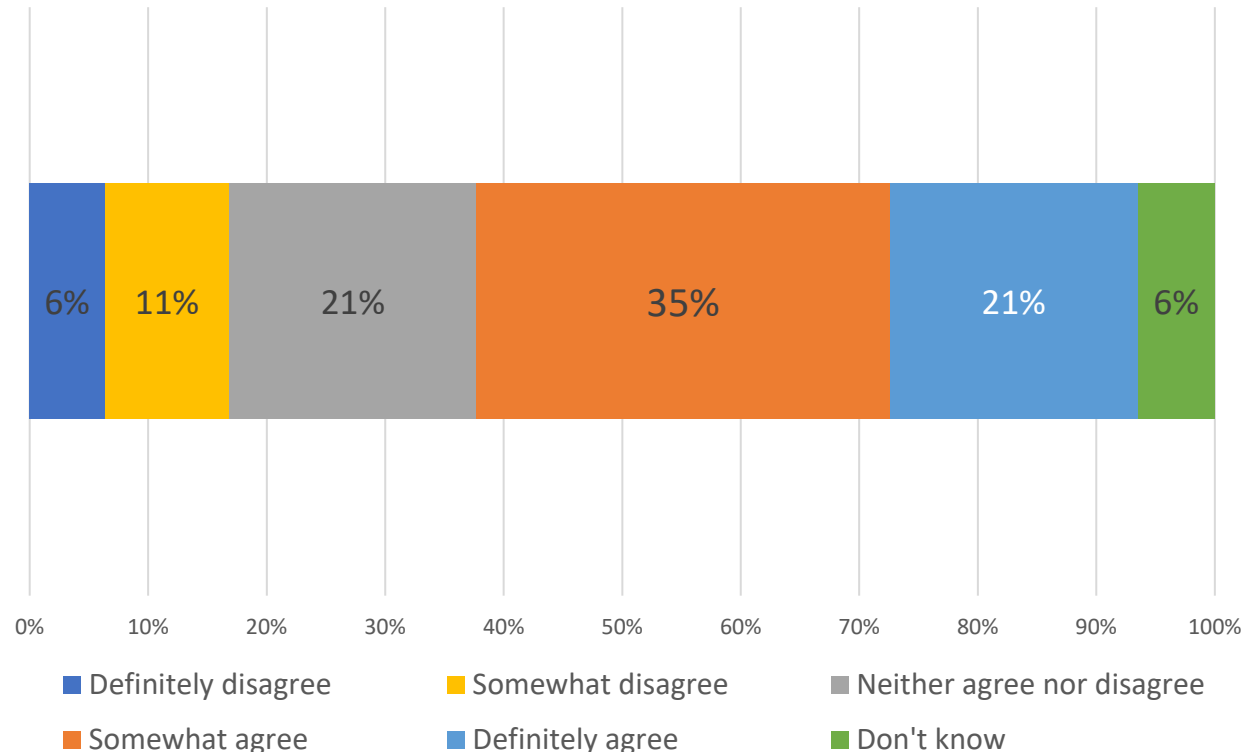


- > Community and industry stakeholders - vets, dog walkers, trainers, conservation groups in focus groups.
- > Community through survey via Let's Talk:
  - > 844 responses
  - > 89% of respondents were dog owners.
- > Local and central government partners – DOC, LINZ and ORC.

# Insights from early engagement

- > Current rules are **generally working well** to promote responsible dog ownership and keep our community safe.
- > Support for current leash requirements (78% agreed or strongly agreed).
- > Support for off leash access in reserves and trails (81–83%).
  - > Non-dog owners were less supportive of these rules (only 38-41% support).
- > Strong support for protections to be put in place where there are sensitive environments (77%).

Do you agree that the Dog Control Bylaw 2020 and Dog Control Policy 2020 are working well to promote responsible dog ownership and keep our community safe?



# Themes raised during early engagement

- > Mixed views on dog access, with some respondents wanting more on-leash areas in busy public spaces, while others wish to retain or expand off-leash access.
- > Repeated issues raised about dogs not being under effective control, dog waste not being collected, dogs roaming, excessive barking, and non-compliance with existing rules.
- > Safety concerns about interactions between off-leash dogs and cyclists on busy trails.
- > High demand for fenced, designated dog parks.
- > Calls for stronger enforcement, compliance monitoring and penalties. Also increased education and training opportunities to improve compliance.

These topics are covered next section.

# Key issues and options

# Councillor guidance requested on appetite for change

- > The following slides list the key topics and a full spectrum of options for how they could be addressed.
- > Staff are seeking councillor input on appetite for change and options based on preliminary analysis.
- > This advice will inform changes that may be proposed in a draft bylaw.

Enable	Restrict	Prohibit
No specific controls i.e. Rely on responsible dog ownership/Dog Control Act only	Provide for subject conditions i.e. Additional controls in specific circumstances	Prevent from occurring i.e. Exclude dogs from specific areas

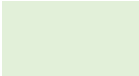
← Less restrictive options | More restrictive options →

# Key issues that we have developed options for

1. Leash rules
2. Off leash dog access
3. Shared trails
4. Urban, mixed-use reserves
5. Sensitive environments
6. Effective control
7. Dog waste, barking, roaming and general nuisance
8. Land with lease/easements agreements

# 1. Leash rules

Issue and explanation	Spectrum of options to consider
<p>A growing call for dog on leash reserves was shown in the community survey. Respondents raised the need for dogs to be on leash in busy areas and in some reserves.</p> <p>Staff are considering certain reserves, busy lakefront areas and sports grounds.</p>	<b>A:</b> Status quo
	<b>B:</b> Non-regulatory: Signage and communications to communicate where dogs are currently required to be on leash.
	<b>C:</b> Specific rules to require dogs to be on leash at certain <u>times</u> in public places (i.e., sports grounds when games are being played or seasonal rules for when lakefronts are busy).
	<b>D:</b> Change certain reserves to require dogs to be on leash.
	<b>E:</b> Change certain reserves to prohibit dogs.

 Based on preliminary analysis, options **C-D** are considered most effective and responsive to the issue.

## 2. Off leash dog access

Issue and explanation	Spectrum of options to consider
<p>Requests for more off leash dog areas in the community survey.</p> <p>Areas that currently dogs to be leashed include Queenstown Gardens, Queenstown Hill, Marine Parade, public footpaths, Matakauri Park, cemeteries. Some respondents requested that these controls are removed.</p> <p>QLDC has a permissive dog control settings; where there are currently controls in place, there are rationale for these (i.e. proximity to busy Queenstown CBD, place is frequented by children, sensitive areas in cemeteries etc.).</p>	<p><b>A:</b> Status quo (all reserves off leash, unless excluded)</p> <p><b>B:</b> Non-regulatory tools: clear communications about current dog exercise areas, provide fenced, off leash dog park(s).</p> <p><b>C:</b> Permit public spaces (public footpaths, cemeteries etc) as off leash areas.</p> <p><b>D:</b> Permit dogs to be off leash in reserves where leashing is currently required.</p>

Based on preliminary analysis, option **A** is considered most effective and responsive to the issue.

### 3. Shared trails

Issue and explanation	Spectrum of options to consider
<p>Trails are increasingly busier, some have become key commuting routes.</p> <p>Respondents in the community survey expressed concern about fast-moving cyclists and dogs being off leash on shared paths.</p> <p>Suggested areas for consideration: Frankton track, Wānaka Outlet, Hugo Trail, Arrow River and Lake Hayes.</p>	<p><b>A:</b> Status quo (all trails off leash, unless in an excluded reserve).</p> <p><b>B:</b> Non-regulatory tools: Signage and communications about trail safety (including, speed on bikes and effective control of dogs).</p> <p><b>C:</b> require dogs to be on leash across <u>specific</u>, busy trails in the district (i.e. Frankton Track).</p> <p><b>D:</b> require dogs to be on leash across <u>all</u> trails in the district.</p> <p><b>E:</b> prohibit dogs on <u>specific</u>, busy trails across the district.</p>

Based on preliminary analysis, options **B-D** are considered most effective and responsive to the issue.

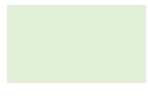
# 4. Urban, mixed-use reserves

Explanation	Spectrum of options to consider
<p>Increasing numbers of people and dogs in urban reserves which may have mixed uses – playgrounds, BBQ areas, skateparks and pump tracks.</p>	<p><b>A:</b> Status quo (off leash, unless in an excluded reserve).</p>
<p>These are increasingly busy spaces and where children are likely to frequent. Although may also be important areas to exercise dogs.</p>	<p><b>B:</b> Non-regulatory tools: Increase signage and communications about effective control and where a dog much be placed on a leash.</p>
<p>Staff are considering if it remains appropriate for these to remain as off leash areas.</p>	<p><b>C:</b> Require that a dog must be placed on a leash within a <u>specified distance</u> (i.e., 2m) from a playground (or other area).</p>
	<p><b>D:</b> Change <u>certain</u> mixed-use reserves to require dogs to be on leash.</p>
	<p><b>E:</b> Change <u>all</u> mixed-use reserves to require dogs to be on leash.</p>
	<p><b>F:</b> Prohibit dogs from mixed-use reserves.</p>

 Based on preliminary analysis, options **C-E** are considered most effective and responsive to the issue.

# 5. Sensitive environments

Issue and explanation	Spectrum of options to consider
<p>Section 20 of the Act enables bylaws to protect wildlife. During the last bylaw review Council made changes for Matakauri Reserve, a regionally significant wetland.</p> <p>Survey respondents support introducing measures for sensitive environments, particularly for ground-nesting bird habitats and wetlands.</p> <p>QLDC recently adopted the Climate and Biodiversity Plan 2025-28 which places a strong emphasis on indigenous biodiversity.</p> <p>Approximately seven reserves have been identified for consideration due to ecological values.</p>	<p><b>A:</b> Status quo (all off leash, unless an excluded reserve).</p> <hr/> <p><b>B:</b> Non-regulatory tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use signage and communications.</li><li>• Use other methods (i.e. fencing).</li></ul> <p><b>C:</b> Require dogs are put on a leash a specified distance from a sensitive wildlife area (i.e. 20m).</p> <p><b>D:</b> <u>temporary</u> changes in specific areas during certain times (i.e. seasonally).</p> <p><b>E:</b> Make changes to specific reserves to require dogs to be <u>on leash</u>.</p> <p><b>F:</b> Make changes to specific reserves to <u>prohibit</u> dogs.</p>

 Preliminary analysis suggests the need for a new regulatory approach to address this issue (options C-F).

## 6. Effective control

### Issue and explanation

Respondents in the community survey raised safety concerns with dogs rushing or having poor recall. Also, that off-leash access is only appropriate when dogs are under effective control.

Clarification is needed on what 'effective control' means.

This was a strong theme through consultation with community and stakeholders.

### Spectrum of options to consider

**A:** Status quo (keep dog under effective control by voice or signal).

**B:** Use non-regulatory tools:

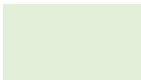
- Increase signage and communications on rules and effective control.
- Increase training and education events.

**C:** Define 'effective control' (i.e. owner paying active attention, dog is responsive to commands etc.) to provide clarity of the requirement and improve enforceability.

Based on preliminary analysis, option **C** is considered most effective and responsive to the issue.

# 7. Dog waste, barking, roaming and general nuisance

Issue and explanation	Spectrum of options to consider
<p>Respondents in the community survey expressed concern:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• dog waste (i.e. Hanleys Farm, Mt Iron and on trails) not being collected, and</li><li>• owners not adhering to rules to have a dog on a leash.</li></ul> <p>Complaints about roaming dogs (Luggate, Hanleys Farm and Hāwea) and dogs barking.</p>	<p><b>A:</b> Status quo (dog waste must be collected immediately, QLDC uses infringements provided for in the Act).</p> <p><b>B:</b> Non-regulatory tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• More communications, education and training events about responsible ownership.</li><li>• Increase number of dog waste bins and bag dispensers.</li><li>• Continue lending bark collars.</li><li>• Improve signage and clarity of dog control map.</li><li>• Additional monitoring.</li></ul> <p><b>C:</b> Define ‘nuisance’ with examples (i.e. barking, fouling, uncontrolled roaming) to clarify and improve enforcement ability under the Act.</p>

 Based on preliminary analysis, options **A-B** are considered most effective and responsive to the issue.

## 8. Land with lease/easements agreements

Issue and explanation	Spectrum of options to consider
<p>Staff raised this type of land may have dog access rules that differ from the policy/bylaw.</p> <p>Lease/easement rules prevail over the policy/bylaw.</p> <p>Objective of any proposed changes would be to ensure <b>clarity of rules</b>.</p>	<p><b>A:</b> Status quo (apply existing framework, all easements treated as off leash areas, no provision for leases).</p> <hr/> <p><b>B:</b> Non-regulatory tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use explanatory note in the bylaw to bring attention to site specific requirements.</li><li>• Install signage where easement or lease conditions apply.</li></ul> <p><b>C:</b> Clarify the rules for trails with easements to reflect current practice, permitting dogs to be off leash, unless lease or easement rules determine otherwise.</p>

Based on preliminary analysis, option **C** is considered most effective and responsive to the issue.

# Other topics raised through early engagement

- > Other changes being considered, neither are material changes:
  - > amendments to the policy and bylaw wording to better reflect the direction set in the Act i.e. policy sets the overall direction, principles and approach and the bylaw is focused on enforcement.
  - > General updates to ensure bylaw remains up-to-date with relevant legislation and supports clear interpretation.
- > Other issues primarily largely sit outside the scope of the bylaw development, are part of alternative operational or implementation processes, as described in this table:

Issues raised through early engagement which are generally outside the scope of the bylaw/policy review	
Issue	Process
Stronger enforcement and compliance monitoring	Enforcement Strategy and Prosecution Policy due for review in 2026.
Provision of dog parks	Enabled under the current bylaw; no change needed.
More signage and clearer maps	Best progressed through implementation after a new bylaw is made.
More education/training programmes	Recommended as a response to various issues, strategic direction provided in the Policy.
High registration fees	Fees are considered through Annual Plan process.
Impact of cats on sensitive environments	Not within scope of the Act.
Stricter controls for dangerous dogs	National rules (provided for in the Act) are out of scope.
Dog welfare issues	Determined by Animal Welfare Act 1999; lead agency is SPCA.
Increased dog access on DOC land	Determined by Department of Conservation
Dog access on public transport	Determined by Otago Regional Council

# Next steps

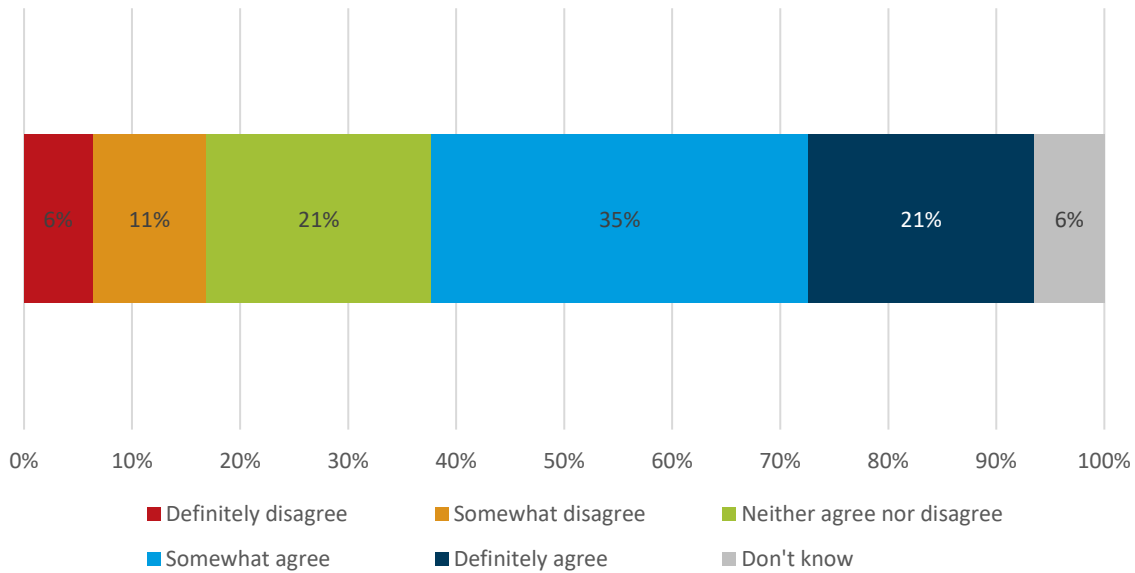


Questions and discussion

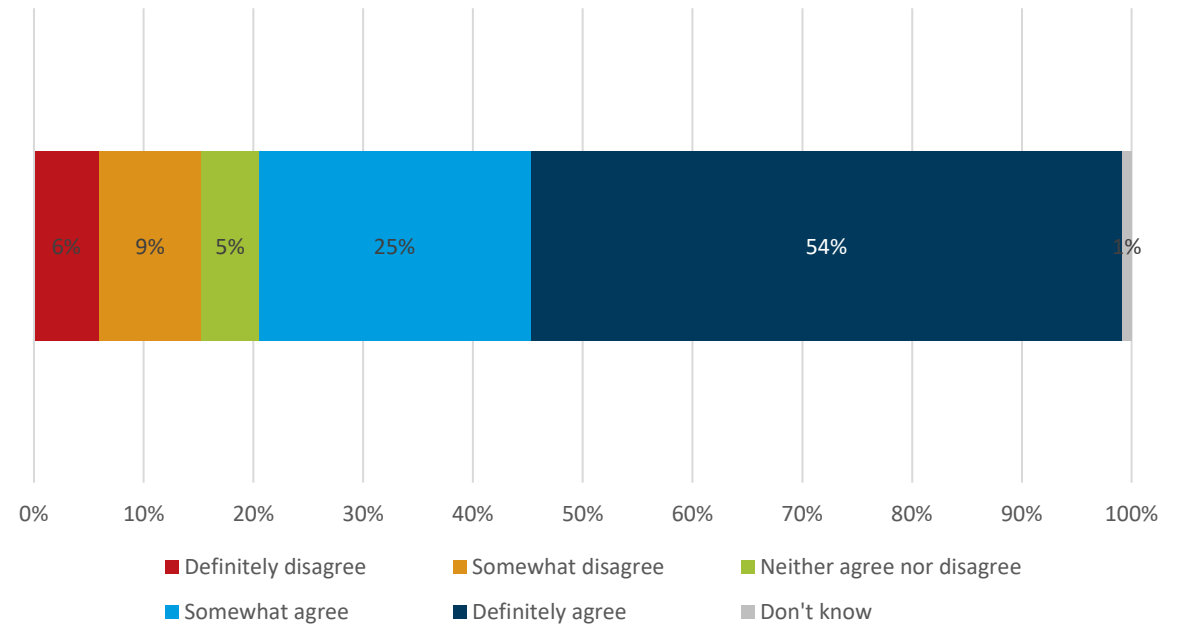
# Attachment A: Early engagement survey results

# Early engagement community survey results

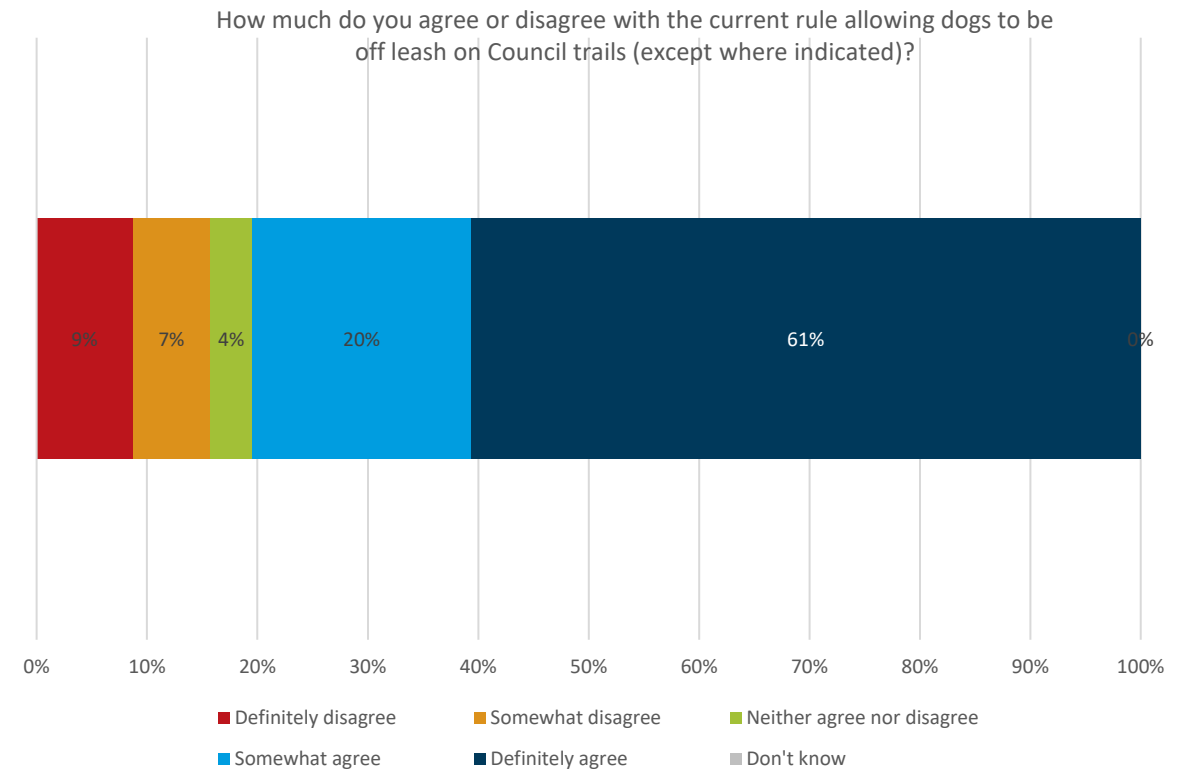
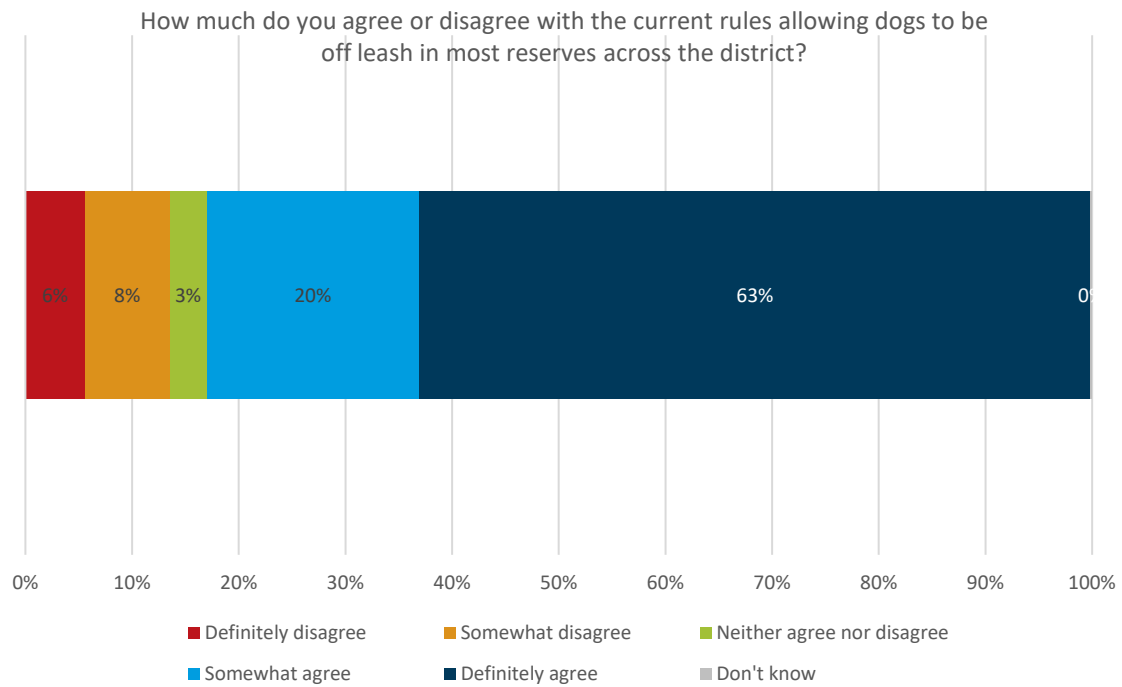
Do you agree that the Dog Control Bylaw 2020 and Dog Control Policy 2020 are working well to promote responsible dog ownership and keep our community safe?



How much do you agree or disagree with the current rules requiring dogs to be on leash on public footpaths and when visiting certain Council areas?



# Early engagement community survey results



# Early engagement community survey results

Do you think Council should put protections in place for reserves that have sensitive environments or wildlife?

