

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Communities, Housing & Public Protection
DATE	27 May 2025
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Thematic Report – Community Safety – Dog Related Incidents
REPORT NUMBER	POL/25/118
DIRECTOR	
CHIEF OFFICER	
REPORT AUTHOR	Inspector Mark Young, North East Division, Police Scotland
TERMS OF REFERENCE	2.20

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report provides the Committee with an overview of legislation, current process and procedures, and data in respect of incidents and offences relating to Dangerous Dogs and Banned Breeds.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Committee: -

- 2.1 Discuss, comment on, and endorse the report.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 North East Division, in collaboration with stakeholders, manages the risks relating to dangerous dogs through the implementation of strategies, policies, and measures to enhance public safety, provide community reassurance and take the most appropriate action in respect of owners and offenders.
- 3.2 On 23 February 2024, XL Bully Dogs were added to the list of banned breeds within the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 with it being illegal to own an XL Bully type dog without an exemption certificate from 31 July 2024. It is mandatory for all legally held XL Bully Type Dogs to.
- Be microchipped and neutered.
 - Have third party insurance in place.

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- When in a public place they must be muzzled and kept on a lead at all times.

3.3 PARTNERSHIP APPROACH

- 3.4 Given public interest, increased reporting, the necessity to collate information to assess/mitigate risk and provide community reassurance, Community Safety Partnership Officers within Aberdeen City identify all dog related incidents/crime reports daily and share information with partners in order that the information can be enhanced, risk can be assessed and incidents allocated to the most appropriate agency.
- 3.5 In addition to partners within the Community Safety Partnership, Aberdeen City Police Officers also have direct contact with the Local Area Dog Warden (or Animal Welfare Officer).
- 3.6 The sharing of information and joint investigations ensures the most appropriate action can be taken by the most appropriate agency and employing the model of Engage, Explain, Encourage and Enforce where necessary with Police Scotland and LADW having a range of options including Dog Control Notices to seizure of dogs and report submission to COPFS.
- 3.7 Community Safety Officers have access to Exemption Certification List and DCNs across Scotland.
- 3.8 There are currently several kennelling facilities across Scotland used to care for seized dogs and look after their welfare. There is a requirement to formalise the facilities and as such procurement is ongoing.

3.9 CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.10 It should be noted that not all incidents involving dogs (excluding Banned Breeds) being dangerously out of control will result in criminality being recorded and as such, information held, and further enquiries conducted by Police and LADW leads to most appropriate action. There is a requirement to evidence grounds of reasonable apprehension that the dog may injure person whether or not actual injury is inflicted. This will dictate the most appropriate course of action.
- 3.11 Banned Breeds are involved, Police Scotland will take primacy.
- 3.12 Each incident involving Dangerous Dogs is assessed on its own merits with appropriate risk assessment conducted for ongoing and not ongoing incidents taking cognisance of location, spontaneity and pre planning with support provided to Local Policing through Specialist Officers and Tactical Advisors.
- 3.13 In all instances, Police Scotland and partners will maximise the safety of the public and minimise risk to Officers and other agencies whilst providing

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community reassurance, support victims and also support responsible owners who have been affected by legislative changes.

- 3.14 Where Banned Breeds, including XL Bullies, have been dangerously out of control, the animal will be seized and transported by Specialist Police resource and cared for within a kennelling facility (locations not disclosable) until they are typed and trial concluded. All reports to COPFS are submitted within Custody Report timescales. Owners can and have authorised euthanasia on seizure.
- 3.15 Where information or intelligence indicates that owners of Banned Breeds have no exemption certificate or owners are failing to follow legislative requirements, Police Officers, in consultation with partners, will assess if there is a requirement for the dog to be seized.
- 3.16 Officers will consider the temperament of the dog including history, environment in which it is located, welfare of the animal and owner suitability including history, willingness to engage and understanding of legislation. The decision to seize a dog or leave it in the community will be ratified by an Officer of Inspector Rank or above.
- 3.17 Where a dog poses any risk to the public it will be seized.
- 3.18 It should be highlighted that at this time, where incidents are suspected to involve XL Bullies, COPFS require the dog to be 'typed' to ensure it is banned under the legislation.
- 3.19 There are currently no Dog Legislation Officers employed by Police Scotland; however, assistance is gained through DLOs from other Police Services in England through mutual aid. Arrangements are in place through the Local Policing Programme to ensure efficiency in dog typing whilst Police Scotland look to address this skills gap nationally.

3.20 DATA

- 3.21 From a review of the Exemption Database there are in excess of 3300 Exemption Certificates in Scotland with 278 registered to Aberdeen City Postcodes.
- 3.22 Between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025 there were 50 Crime Records in Aberdeen City with offences relating to Dogs Dangerously out of Control (33), Dog in Public Place without lead or muzzle (12), Possessed out with the Accordance of their Licence (3) or Gift Dog (2). From these crime records it should be highlighted.
 - 9 Crime Records were closed as No Crime after appropriate enquiries had been conducted with Dog in Public Place without lead for muzzle accounting for 4 and Dog Dangerously out of Control accounting for 5.

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- From the 41 remaining Crime Records, 31 are Detected, 2 are Undetected with No Further Lines of Enquiry and 8 enquiries remain Live with further enquiries continuing.
- There were 43 different loci in respect of incidents with 4 locations featuring multiple charges.
- XL Bullies feature in 13 Crime Records with 7 recorded as Dogs Dangerously out of Control and 6 offences linked to exemption conditions. In total 10 individually identified XL Bullies are detailed however it should be noted 1 Crime Record was No Crime and 3 remain as Live and under investigation.
- 4 XL Bullies were euthanised by owners when offences were identified.
- All other crime records (37) detail non banned breeds.

3.23 When compared to previous years.

- 2023/2024 – 38 Crime Records – Dog Dangerously Out of Control (37) and Dog in Public Place without lead or muzzle (1). 21 Detected, 10 Undetected and 7 No Crime. These records do not detail any banned breeds.
- 2022/2023 – 32 Crime Records – Dog Dangerously out of Control (32). 15 Detected, 9 Undetected and 8 No Crime. These records do not detail any banned breeds.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 A collaborative approach to tackling incidents involving Dangerous Dogs and Banned Breeds has provided reassurance to Aberdeen City communities that information relating to same is acted upon and proportionately dealt with based on circumstance presented.
- 4.2 North East Division continues to work and liaise with national departments to ensure Specialist Resource, including DLO, can be obtained for efficient capture of evidence to allow COPFS to make decisions on proceeding whilst considering the wellbeing of victims, owners and animals involved.
- 4.3 Data indicates an increase from the previous year's however this is explained due a change in legislation and XL Bullies being classed as Banned Breeds with the number of Dogs Dangerously out of control having a nominal change with the majority detected, risk mitigated, and several enquiries identified no criminality.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

8. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) <small>*taking into account controls/control actions</small>	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	No significant risks			
Compliance	No significant risks			
Operational	No significant risks			
Financial	No significant risks			

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Reputational	No significant risks			
Environment / Climate	No significant risks			

9. OUTCOMES

<u>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan</u>	
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	Police Scotland are key partners within Community Planning Aberdeen and help contribute to the shared vision for 2026 that ' <i>Aberdeen is a place where all people can prosper</i> ' and towards the achievement of the LOIP theme which aims to make people more resilient and protect them from harm; where every child, irrespective of their circumstances, is supported to grow, develop and reach their full potential; and where all people in Aberdeen are entitled to live within our community in a manner in which they feel safe and protected from harm, supported when necessary and fully included in the life of the city.
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	Police Scotland are key partners within Community Planning Aberdeen and help contribute to the shared vision for 2026 that ' <i>Aberdeen is a place where all people can prosper</i> ' and towards the achievement of the LOIP theme which aims to support individuals and communities to live in healthy, sustainable ways.

10. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	Not required

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Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required
Other	None

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 n/a

12. APPENDICES

12.1 n/a

13. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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