



SOUTH  
KESTEVEN  
DISTRICT  
COUNCIL



## Results of consultation on the number of dogs on leads

March 2025

A consultation undertaken to establish if the introduction of a Public Spaces Protection Order to restrict the number of dogs on leads one person could walk at any one time would be supported, or not.

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## **Purpose**

1. The purpose of this report is to update members of South Kesteven District Council's Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet and Full Council with the results of the consultation to inform the potential introduction of a Public Spaces Protection Order centred on the number of dogs on leads.
2. The purpose of this consultation was to identify if there is a need to introduce a PSPO limiting the number of dogs on leads one person can walk at the same time, or not in South Kesteven. The survey was structured so that it collected peoples' opinions on:
  - The possible introduction of a PSPO to limit the number of dogs on leads being walked
  - If a PSPO was introduced, what the limit on the number of dogs on leads being walked should be and
  - the area(s) where the PSPO should apply
  - if a PSPO is the most appropriate tool to deal with this type of anti-social behaviour or if another solution might be more appropriate, and if these solutions would be supported

It also asked for details on:

- any experiences of incidences of anti-social behaviour where the number of dogs on leads being walked was thought to be a contributory factor

and also provided an opportunity for those who might be affected by the implementation of a PSPO limiting the number of dogs that could be walked by one person to have their say.

## **Proposal**

3. To consult with a variety of stakeholders. The purpose being to:
  - Identify if there is a need to introduce a PSPO limiting the number of dogs on leads one person can walk at the same time, or not
  - If there is:
    - what the limit on the number of dogs on leads being walked should be and
    - the area(s) where the PSPO should apply
  - To gather evidence on incidences of anti-social behaviour where the number of dogs on leads being walked was a contributory factor
  - To establish if stakeholders think a PSPO is the most appropriate tool to deal with this type of anti-social behaviour or if there are other solutions that are available and if these solutions would be supported
  - To allow those who might be affected by the implementation of a PSPO to have their say

## **Objectives**

4. To ensure that various stakeholders are included in the consultation process and given an opportunity to feedback. The objectives of the consultation were to:

- Inform the decision that might be taken by the council in respect of considering if a new PSPO restricting the number of dogs on leads one individual can walk should be introduced, and if it should, where in the district this might apply
- Measure the degree of support or otherwise for the concept
- Measure the degree of support or otherwise for any proposed PSPO
- Measure the degree of support for any other solution
- Gather feedback which could be used to inform the parameters of a PSPO limiting the number of dogs that can be walked at once by an individual. The results of this fact-finding exercise would then enable SKDC to prepare the terms of the PSPO, if required, and ultimately demonstrate that it has met the requirements as set out in s72 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime, Policing Act 2014 to carry out the necessary consultation, publicity, and notification before making, varying, or extending a PSPO
- Understand and be aware of the impact the introduction of a PSPO limiting the number of dogs that could be walked by one individual may have on specific stakeholders
- Assess any potential impact of the PSPO on the community including demonstrating that council has had due regard to compliance with the Equality Act 2010

## Timescales

5. Preparatory work was undertaken during September 2024. The consultation was launched on 27 November 2024 for a period of four weeks – and was closed at 5pm on 24 December 2024. Analysis of the results was then undertaken.

## Stakeholders

6. The stakeholders were identified as follows:
  - Any individual living in the district who wanted to make representation
  - The Police; including the Chief Officer of Lincolnshire Police and the local policing body (the Neighbourhood Policing Team for the district)
  - The Lincolnshire Police and Crime Commissioner
  - Parish, town, district and county councillors across the district
  - Charities and other organisations centred on animal welfare. These included the Kennel Club, the RSPCA, PDSA and the Dogs Trust.
  - Businesses providing services for dog owners. These included Veterinary Practices, Boarding Kennels/Home Boarders and Professional Dog Walkers based in South Kesteven

## Methodology

7. The table below identifies the method(s) used for each of the stakeholder types:

| Stakeholders                | Method(s)                                    | Details   |
|-----------------------------|--|---|
| Residents of South Kesteven | Members of the public were made aware of the | Potential respondents referred to survey link to participate in the |

|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
|   | <p>consultation through the following channels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Press release</li> <li>• SKDC Social Media Channels</li> <li>• SKDC web site</li> <li>• Poster</li> </ul> | <p>consultation. If unable to submit a response on line, a member of the Neighbourhoods Team could contact them to complete a survey with them over the phone.</p> <p>Press release promoting the consultation included the weblink and QR code to the survey.</p> <p>Consultation promoted on social media channels Facebook and X (Twitter) Posts included a link to the survey.</p> <p>Webpage on <a href="http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk">www.southkesteven.gov.uk</a> included link to survey and a short explanation of why the consultation is taking place.</p> <p>Poster promoting the consultation was displayed in specific locations (parks, playing fields etc) by the Neighbourhoods Team.</p> |
| <b>Lincolnshire Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Lincolnshire</b> | The chief officer for Lincolnshire Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner contacted by email   | Neighbourhoods Team contacted the chief officer for Lincolnshire Police, the Neighbourhood Policing Team and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Lincolnshire   |
| <b>Town and Parish Councils, district and county councillors</b>                  | <p>Town and Parish Clerks emailed.</p> <p>District and County Councillors informed of the consultation via email.</p>  | Neighbourhoods team emailed town and parish councils, district and county councillors. A copy of the poster was attached for them to print and display on parish noticeboards.  |
| <b>Charities and other animal welfare organisations</b>                           | Charities and other animal welfare organisations emailed   | Charities and animal welfare organisations contacted by the Neighbourhoods Team   |
| <b>Businesses providing services for dog owners</b>                               | Businesses providing services for dog owners emailed   | Businesses in the district providing services to dog owners contacted by the Neighbourhoods Team. They included veterinary practices, boarding kennels / home boarders and professional dog walkers   |

## Details

8. The survey included the following:

- An introduction to the consultation, why we needed their help and how their feedback will be used to inform any decision(s) that might be taken in respect of introducing an additional PSPO which restricts the number of dogs on leads one person can walk at any one time
- A question to ascertain if respondents would, in principle, support the introduction of a PSPO restricting the number of dogs on leads being walked or not
- A free text question to establish why they chose to answer in this way
- A question asking them if they have experienced any specific instances of anti-social behaviour over the last 3 years where they thought the number of dogs on leads being walked was a contributory factor. If they did, they were asked to provide details
- A question to find out if they think a PSPO is the most appropriate means of tackling this issue or if another course of action e.g. issuing a CPN would be more appropriate
- A question to ascertain if they think that the introduction of a PSPO would help to tackle anti-social behaviour, what limit should be placed on the number of dogs on leads being walked. They were given a choice of 3, 4, 5 or 6 dogs.
- A question to find out if knowing about the guidelines would change their opinion on any number they might have chosen
- A question to establish if they think a PSPO should be introduced, should this apply district wide or to specific areas?
- A space for them to detail any negative impacts if a PSPO is implemented
- An option for them to ask questions or make further observations about the consultation
- An opportunity for them to supply their details so that they could be contacted in relation to their query
- A question to identify the type of user (individual, charity, business type or town/parish/county council)
- A statement on how any personal data they supplied would be treated
- A question to identify their postcode- down to sector level.
- A thank you and closing date

9. The webpage included an introduction to the consultation, why their help was needed and how their feedback will be used to inform any decision that might be taken in respect of a decision to implement a Public Space Protection Order.

10. The press release included:

- An introduction to the consultation
- A link to the survey and the QR code
- Background to the consultation – why it was undertaken
- What to do if they didn't have on-line access
- Next steps

11. Promoting via Social Media channels included:

- An introduction to the consultation
- A link to the survey

The consultation was posted on Facebook twice during the consultation period and reached 8,689 people. There were 33 reactions, comments and shares and 25 clicks on the link to the survey.

The consultation was also promoted on X (Twitter) twice. There were 454 impressions as a result. 12 individuals engaged with the post and 5 clicked on the link to the survey.

**The email/letter included:**

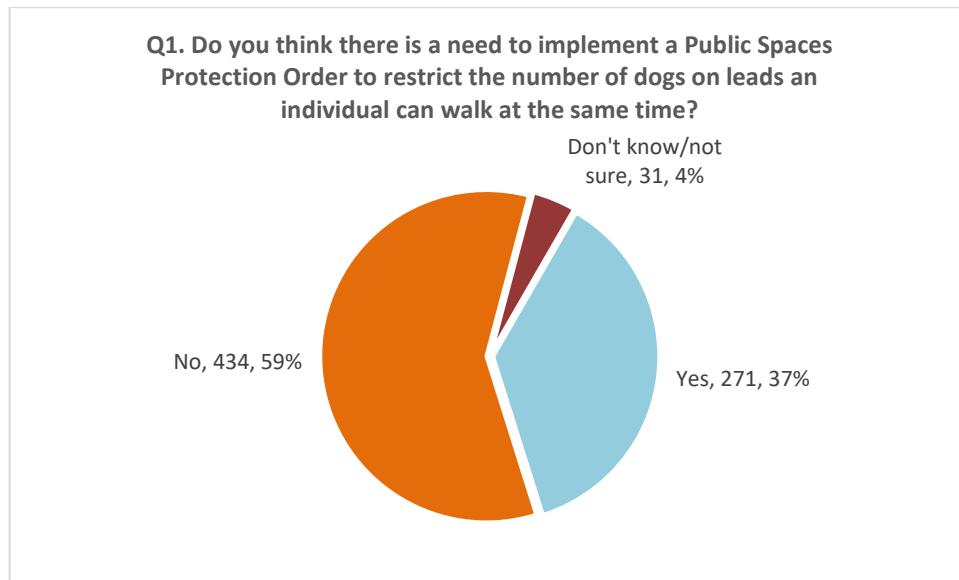
- An introduction to the consultation
- A link to the survey and the QR code
- What to do if they wanted a printed copy of the survey
- Next steps

**The poster included:**

- Information on the proposal
- How those seeing the poster could help
- Next steps

**The results**

12. The first question on the survey asked respondents if they thought there was a need to implement a Public Spaces Protection Order which would require an individual walking dogs on leads to restrict the number of dogs they walk at the same time. Just over a third of respondents (271 or 36.8%) supported this proposal. Three fifths (434 or 59.0 %) didn't, and a handful (31 or 4.2%) didn't know or weren't sure, as illustrated below:



13. When asked why they had chosen to answer in this way, their responses can be summarised as follows:

**Control and Safety Concerns:** Many comments expressed concerns about the ability to control multiple dogs, especially in public spaces. Issues raised by respondents included the potential for dogs to become uncontrollable, the risk of accidents, and the difficulty of managing dog behaviour in groups.

**“If a person is walking too many dogs, they cannot control all of them if an adverse problem occurs.”**

**“I think it’s impossible to control several dogs together in a public space.”**

**Professional Dog Walkers:** Several comments highlighted the role of professional dog walkers, emphasizing their skills, training, and the potential negative impact that restricting the number of dogs they can walk would have. Concerns raised included the financial impact on their businesses and the potential for increased prices for customers.

**“If you do this my dog walkers will have to put up her prices meaning I can't afford to have a dog walker. I work long shifts for the NHS and I would therefore have to give my dogs up for adoption”**

**“...These people are highly skilled at walking larger numbers of dogs safely and will have their businesses destroyed by such a ridiculous suggestion....”**

**Public Safety and Comfort:** Comments reflected concerns about public safety and comfort, particularly for those who are uncomfortable around dogs. Issues raised by respondents included the intimidation that large groups of dogs might engender, the potential for dog attacks, and the difficulty of navigating public spaces with multiple dogs.

**“...It can be alarming to others using the space if the dogs are out of control...”**

**“Multiple dogs can often overpower a single person walking them, break free and cause harm to other people or dogs”**

**Dog Welfare and Socialisation:** Some comments emphasised the benefits of socialisation for dogs, noting that dogs enjoy being in groups and that well-trained dogs can be managed effectively. Concerns included the potential negative impact on dog welfare if restrictions are imposed.

**“...Dogs enjoy socialising in groups, my dog has walked in bigger groups his whole life (he is 6) dogs are pack animals...”**

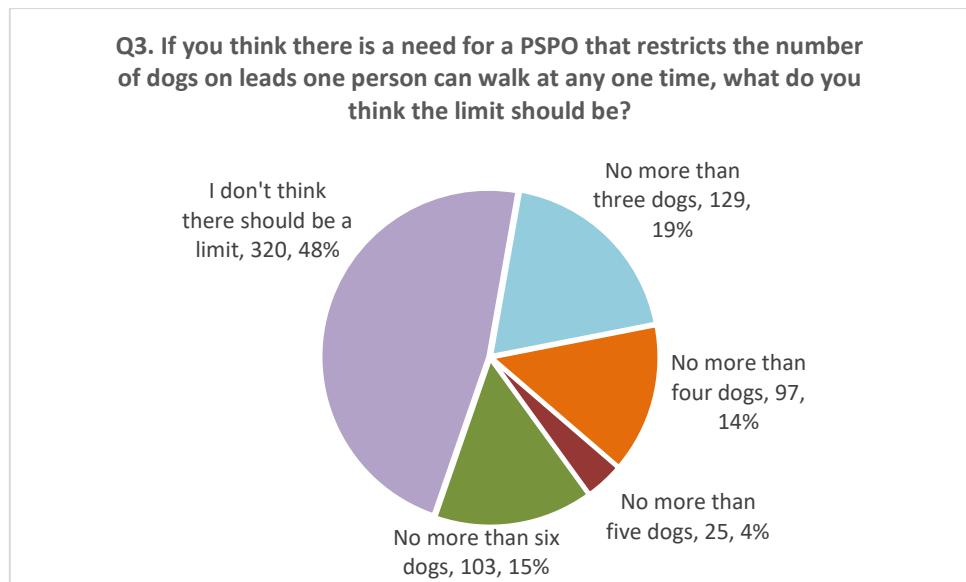
**“It will cripple their business to lower the number of dogs per group and make prices too high for customers, resulting in more dogs being neglected at home or given up to shelters.”**

**Regulation and Enforcement:** Several comments discussed the need for regulation and enforcement, with some suggesting that existing laws are sufficient and others calling for more targeted measures. Issues raised included the difficulty of enforcing new rules and the potential for unfairly penalising responsible dog owners and walkers.

**“A waste of time, resources and money implementing a “busy body” law that panders to a tiny minority of residents with nothing better to do than interfere with the freedoms of others.”**

**“I believe that frequency and severity of the risk does not justify any regulation.”**

14. Respondents were asked the following question “If you think there is a need for a PSPO that restricts the number of dogs on leads one person can walk at any one time, what do you think the limit should be?” Nearly half (320 or 47.5%) thought there shouldn’t be a limit. The remaining responses were allocated across each of the other answer categories – as illustrated below:



15. When asked what they thought the limit should be, if not what was listed above, the 97 responses received could be summarised into two themes. These were:

**Preference for Limiting the Number of Dogs:** Some of the comments received expressed a preference for limiting the number of dogs per walker, with their suggestions ranging from one to two dogs. This theme highlighted concerns about control and safety when walking multiple dogs.

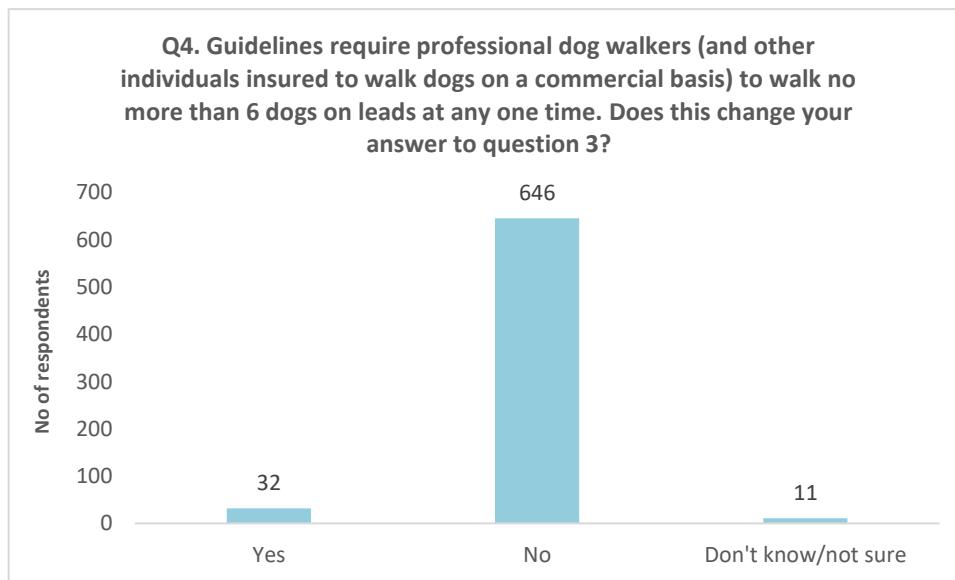
**“No more than 2 dogs.”**

**“It is difficult to control a large number of dogs”**

**Consideration for Professional Dog Walkers:** Several comments suggested different rules for professional dog walkers, including higher limits and exemptions. Respondents were keen to stress that there was a need to ensure that the skills and qualifications of professional dog walkers were recognised.

**“...If this is going to come in to operation maybe you can have an exclusion clause for professionals that have been registered insured etc...”**

16. Respondents were then informed that guidelines require professional dog walkers (and other individuals insured to walk dogs on a commercial basis) to walk no more than 6 dogs on leads at any one time. They were asked if this changed their answer to the previous question. Nine out of ten respondents (646 or 93.8%) said that it wouldn't. 32 respondents (4.6%) said that it would. This is shown in the graph below:



17. When asked to describe why they had chosen to answer in this way, over 500 respondents commented. Their responses have been grouped into the following themes:

**Control and Safety Concerns:** Many comments expressed concerns about the ability of dog walkers to control multiple dogs, with some suggesting a limit of 2-4 dogs for safety reasons. Issues mentioned include handling dog mess, managing large or aggressive dogs, and ensuring public safety.

**“Dogs are a pack animal and cannot be properly controlled by one person”**

**“One person cannot guarantee the safety of six dogs, the person cannot respond to multiple issues at one time, this causes an issue for the safety of that person and other people (and other dogs!) around them”**

**Professional Dog Walkers' Capabilities:** Several comments highlighted the skills and experience professional dog walkers have, arguing that they should be trusted to know their limits and manage up to 6 dogs. Some suggested that professionals should be subject to different rules than the public.

**“...Most Professional dog walkers I've encountered are capable of knowing how many of their dogs they can walk with it still being deemed as safe.”**

**Professional dog walkers know how many dogs they can cope with at any one time!”**

**Regulation and Guidelines:** Mixed opinions on the need for regulations and guidelines were expressed. Some believed that the current guidelines are sufficient, while others called for stricter regulations, including licensing and training requirements for those walking dogs.

**“.... It should be more about education and training of individuals and professionals as well as licensing of professionals....”**

**Public Perception and Experiences:** The comments received reflected a range of personal experiences with dog walkers, from positive interactions to negative incidents involving uncontrolled dogs. Some people were intimidated by large groups of dogs, while others have never encountered issues.

**“When walking my young golden retriever, I’ve had a couple of bad experiences with a supposed dog walker losing control of two of her 5 dogs....”**

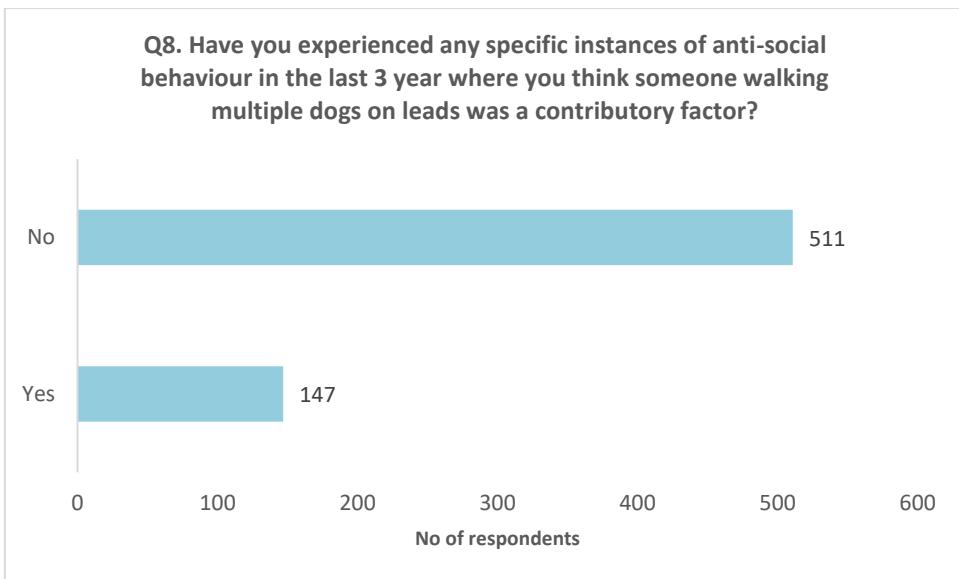
**“I have had dogs all of my life and I have never come across any issues with a person walking multiple dogs.”**

**Economic and Practical Considerations:** A few comments mentioned the financial viability of dog walking businesses, suggesting that a limit of 6 dogs is necessary for profitability. Others argue that dog walkers should adjust their practices to ensure safety and control.

**“People who have dog walking businesses will be affected by this.”**

**“...They just need to employ more people or walk more times throughout the day rather than try to exercise all their dogs during one walk...”**

18. Question 6 on the survey asked respondents if they thought the PSPO should apply to specific areas within South Kesteven, or apply to all publicly accessible land across the district. Two thirds of respondents (292 or 66.8%) thought the orders, if introduced, should apply to all land that is publicly accessible. One third of respondents (145 or 33.2%) thought the PSPO should apply to specific areas.
19. Areas within South Kesteven identified by respondents included parks and open spaces, town centres and other areas where footfall is high. Specific locations mentioned by respondents included Londonthorpe Woods, Wyndham Park and Stamford High Street.
20. When asked if they had experienced any specific instances of anti-social behaviour in the last 3 years where they thought someone walking multiple dogs on leads was a contributory factor, three quarters of respondents (511 or 77.7%) said that they hadn’t. Just over a fifth of respondents (147 or 22.3%) thought that they had. This is shown in the graph overleaf:



21. When asked to describe what happened, the comments received provided some additional detail on specific occurrences. Others could be grouped into the following themes:

**Lack of Control Over Dogs:** Many comments highlighted issues with dog walkers not being able to control their dogs, leading to dogs running off, jumping on people, or causing disturbances. This included both professional dog walkers and dog owners.

**“Only last week my dog was harassed by two dogs, all dogs on leads, but the walker could not control them, they were too strong for them...”**

**Dog Fouling:** Several comments mentioned those walking their dogs not picking up after their dogs, leading to dog mess in public areas such as footpaths, parks, and streets.

**“...I would class allowing your dog (or dog in your care) to have a poo and not pick it up (regardless of whether it is in the countryside, it’s still a public footpath people have to walk along) as anti-social behaviour ....”**

**Aggressive or Intimidating Behaviour:** There were also instances of dogs displaying aggressive or intimidating behaviour towards other dogs, people, or children. This included dogs attacking other dogs, jumping on people, and causing fear or anxiety.

**“...Each time our dog has been injured and had to be treated by a vet....”**

**Impact on Public Spaces:** Comments indicated that uncontrolled dogs and dog fouling negatively impact public spaces, making them less enjoyable and safe for other users. This includes parks, footpaths, and other recreational areas.

**“Blocking of pavements and footpaths on multiple occasions. Failing to clear up dog mess on playing fields.”**

**Responsibility of Dog Owners:** Many comments emphasized the responsibility dog owners had to control their dogs, pick up after them, and ensure that they do not cause disturbances. There was also a call for better training and stricter rules for dog owners.

**“the person not taking responsibility for the dogs behaviour”**

22. Participants were then informed that there are other options that could be considered by the Council to tackle this type of anti-social behaviour. The example given was the issuing of a Community Protection Notice (CPN). A CPN is used to stop an individual, business or organisation from committing anti-social behaviour which spoils a community's way of life. It is applied to a specific individual, business or organisation. Non-compliance would result in similar penalties to the PSPO. When asked if issuing a CPN would be the most appropriate tool to deal with this type of anti-social behaviour or if the Council should consider using a combination of a PSPO and a CPN, equal proportions of respondents (around 20%) thought either a combination of the two methods or issuing a CPN would be appropriate. Three fifths (364 or 60.5%) of respondents weren't sure as shown in the table below:

| <b>Q10. Do you think this should be used?</b>        | <b>No</b> | <b>%</b> |
|--|-----------|----------|
| Alongside a PSPO                                     | 120       | 19.9     |
| Instead of a PSPO                                    | 118       | 19.6     |
| I don't know enough about this to comment either way | 364       | 60.5     |
|  | 602       | 100.0    |

23. When asked why they had chosen to answer in this way, the following threads were present:

**Targeting Problematic Individuals:** Comments made by respondents emphasized the need to target and penalize individuals who are irresponsible or cause issues, rather than imposing blanket restrictions on all dog walkers. This approach is seen as more effective and fairer.

**“I don't see why reputable dog walkers should be penalised for individuals who cannot control a dog/number of dogs at any one time.”**

**Support for Responsible Dog Walkers:** There is strong support for responsible dog walkers who follow guidelines and manage their dogs well. Many believe that these individuals should not be penalized for the actions of a few irresponsible dog walkers.

**“As the majority of dog owners are responsible a targeted approach to any rules/laws is a much more proportionate and appropriate way to deal with irresponsible owners for all issues and I do question whether PSPO's enforcing blanket bans are appropriate...”**

**Concerns About Enforcement:** Several comments expressed concerns about the enforcement of new rules or guidelines. Questions were raised about the practicality and effectiveness of enforcing penalties and whether there are sufficient resources to do so.

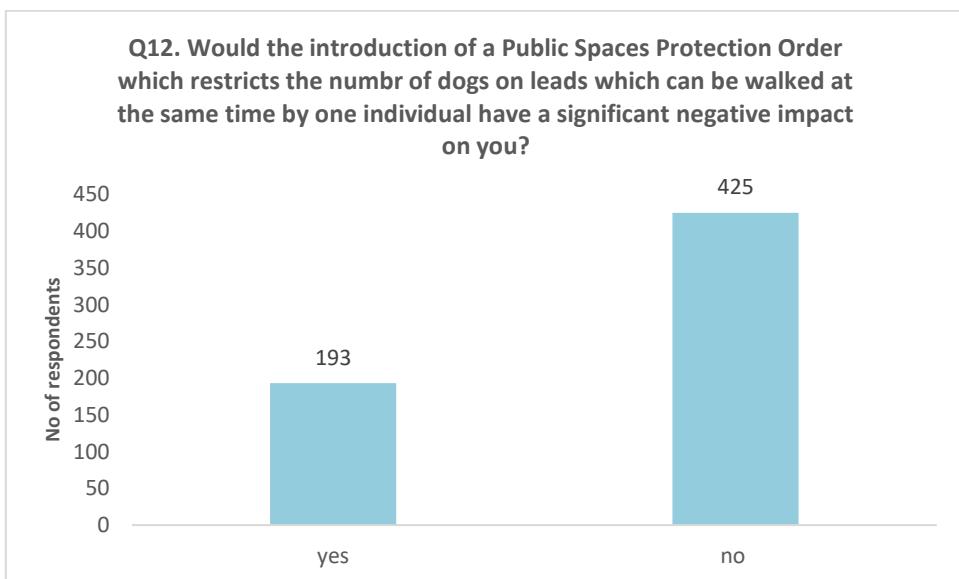
**“And who is going to "police" this. Are you hiring a dozen new employees?”**

**Impact on Dog Walking Businesses:** Concerns were raised about the potential negative impact of new restrictions on professional dog walking businesses. Many believed that responsible businesses should be allowed to operate without unnecessary limitations.

**“Punishment / restrictions for offences, not limitations on private businesses like professional dog walkers. Would impact the dog walker business and also the customers.”**

**Need for Clear Information and Guidelines:** Some comments highlighted the need for clear and comprehensive information and guidelines to make informed decisions. Others requested improvements in communication to enable a better understanding of the proposed rules and their implications.

24. Question 12 asked respondents the following question “Would the introduction of a Public Spaces Protection Order which restricts the number of dogs on leads which can be walked at the same time by one individual have a significant negative impact on you?” Around two thirds (425 or 68.8%) of those taking part in this consultation said that it wouldn’t, as illustrated in the graph below:



25. Analysing the responses to a request to explain why the introduction of a Public Spaces Protection Order would have a significant negative impact on them revealed the following:

**Impact on Dog Walkers' Businesses:** Many comments expressed concern that restricting the number of dogs walked at once would negatively impact dog walkers' businesses. Impacts included potential loss of income, increased prices for services, and the possibility of dog walkers going out of business.

**“I'm a professional dog walker so it would have a massive impact on me. I do 2 dog walks a day (as by 1.30/2pm people don't want their dogs walked, it's too late in the day if they've been at**

**work all day), and I finish nearly 2pm, so if I have to split those 12 dogs over 3 walks, I wouldn't be able to get them all done in time and therefore I'd lose those customers.”**

**Financial and Logistical Challenges for Dog Owners:** Dog owners were worried about the financial and logistical challenges they would face if the number of dogs being walked at any one time by a dog walker is restricted. Challenges included increased costs for dog walking services, difficulty in finding available dog walkers, and the need to walk dogs separately, which would be time-consuming.

**“They operate safely and manage multiple dogs well adhering to current rules, restricting them further will limit their business increase prices and make it much harder to find availability in an already limited market.”**

**Impact on Dogs' Well-being:** Concerns were raised about the negative impact on dogs' well-being if they are walked less frequently or for shorter durations due to restrictions. This included reduced exercise, reduced opportunities for socialization, and stimulation, which could lead to behavioural issues and a decrease in the dogs' quality of life.

**“Our dog walker would have to restrict the number of dogs she could take out meaning our dog may miss out on crucial stimulation and socialisation and would have to spend the majority of the day alone.”**

**Safety and Control:** Some comments highlighted the importance of safety and control when walking multiple dogs. They suggested that responsible dog walkers can manage multiple dogs effectively, while others believed that limiting the number of dogs walked at any one time would improve safety and control, reducing the risk of incidents.

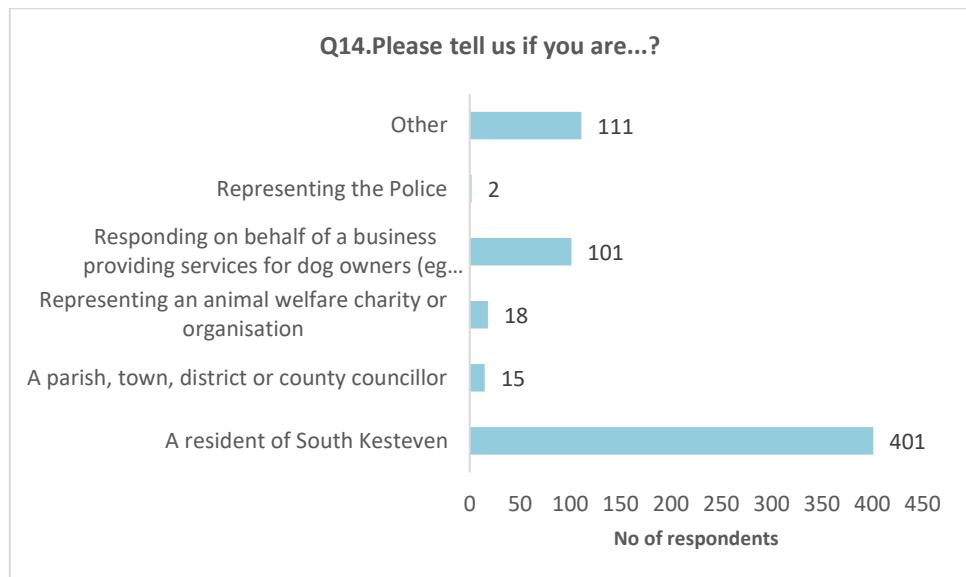
**“I have 5 dogs. I have never had an issue. This rule would negatively impact MY way of life and the health and welfare of my dogs when trying to get out for walks and outside stimulation that every animal needs.”**

**“I feel if an individual didn't walk as many dogs at one time, they could control the ones they have better.”**

26. When asked to describe if they were a resident of the district, a parish, district or county councillor, representing an animal welfare charity, the police, or a business providing services to dog owners, responses were received from various stakeholders. Several respondents (111) chose to answer other. They described themselves as:

- Dog Owners
- Living in another area but a regular visitor to South Kesteven
- Someone who has encountered problems with multiple dogs being walked by one individual
- A person who is concerned about the potential introduction of restrictions
- An individual with qualifications in canine behaviour

27. The graph shows responses were received from district residents, businesses providing services for dog owners, animal charities<sup>1</sup> and organisations as well as the police and local councillors. The numbers of respondents choosing each of these categories is shown below:



28. Respondents were asked to supply their postcode. Of those who answered this question, around 80% (445 or 79.6%) were district postcodes. Around a fifth (114 or 20.4%) were from respondents with postcodes not in South Kesteven, but from other areas including Nottingham, Leicester and Lincoln. It may be worth undertaking further analysis to determine if participation from outside the area has had any impact on the distribution of responses.

29. The final question on the survey asked respondents if they had any questions or would like to comment on anything included in the survey. 89 comments were received. They can be grouped into the following themes:

**Concerns About Enforcement and Effectiveness:** Some comments expressed doubts about the enforcement and effectiveness of any new regulations that might be introduced, emphasizing the need for consistent enforcement and questioning the allocation of resources to these measures.

**“Waste of time legislating for a non-problem without the resources to enforce it.”**

**Impact on Professional Dog Walkers:** Several comments highlighted the potential negative impact that new regulations, if introduced, would have on professional dog walkers, including increased costs, reduced business opportunities, and the need for consultation with these professionals.

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<sup>1</sup> Please see appendix one for response from the RSPCA

**“Please consider the effect that any legislation will have on those people who walk dogs for their job. They are largely self-employed sole traders for whom any change could have a devastating effect on their business.”**

**Focus on More Important Issues:** A recurring theme is the suggestion to prioritise more pressing issues in the community such as homelessness, road conditions, and other public services rather than the introduction of regulations limiting the number of dogs that can be walked by one person at one time.

**“I think you should focus on higher priorities like homelessness, road condition, supply of public services rather than something that is such a small part ....”**

**Mixed Opinions on Dog Control Measures:** There were varied opinions on dog control measures, with some supporting stricter regulations and others advocating more freedom for dog owners. Concerns raised included off-lead dogs, dog fouling, and the need for designated dog areas.

**“No one should be allowed to have dogs off the lead anywhere in public.”**

**“There needs to be areas where dogs can be let off lead.”**

**Need for Education and Awareness:** Several comments emphasized the importance of educating dog owners and the public about responsible dog ownership and the reasons behind any new regulations.

**“Just want to emphasise that I believe education is key to reducing the number of incidents involving dogs.”**

## **Conclusion**

30. Undertaking this consultation has been an important and interesting exercise. An emotive topic, especially for dog owners and professional dog walkers, it attracted local, regional and national publicity and over 700 responses.
  
31. When asked, just over a third of respondents (271 or 36.8%) thought there was a need to implement a Public Spaces Protection Order which would require an individual walking dogs on leads to restrict the number of dogs they walk at the same time. Two thirds (434 or 59.0 %) didn't.
  
32. Upon further examination, the reasons for these choices became clear. Those in favour of a restriction did so because of concerns about the ability of one individual to control multiple dogs, especially in public spaces. Dog fouling, and what was viewed as a direct correlation between the likelihood of this being picked up if multiple dogs are being walked, was also a concern for some. The comfort and safety of the public were also issues – particularly for those who do not like dogs. Those objecting to any potential restriction did so because of the impact it might have on them (if they had more than two dogs) and also professional dog walkers – which in turn might have an

impact - as it could lead to price increases and affect availability. Those representing dog walking businesses were not in favour of the introduction of any restrictions either. The effect it might have on the welfare of dogs (if dog walking services became unaffordable and there were less opportunities for socialisation) was also mentioned.

33. There are several common threads which run through the responses. A recurring theme is how important it is that dog owners and walkers are responsible for, and in control of, their animals. Whilst the number of dogs being walked by one individual is a concern for some, as illustrated in the quote below

**“Multiple dogs can often overpower a single person walking them, break free and cause harm to other people or dogs”**

the issues of a lack of control and responsibility were viewed as more of a problem by respondents, rather than the number of dogs being walked by one person, at any one time.

**“Multiple dogs on leads and under control are not a problem. The problem is out of control dogs and irresponsible owners....”**

**“I think the number of dogs isn’t the issue. All dog related anti-social behaviour instances reported (on the news etc) seem to be individual dog cases, not multiple dogs at (being) the responsibility of one person”**

This viewpoint is also shared by the animal welfare charity-the RSPCA, as shown in the quote below:

**“However, small numbers of dogs can also cause nuisance and distress if a dog walker is not in control of them.”**

34. Another thread running through the consultation is the potential impact the introduction of a PSPO limiting the number of dogs that can be walked by a person at any one time would have on professional dog walking businesses. This point was made by both professional dog walkers and those who use their services.

**“It may mean our local dog walkers go out of business and these are a lifeline to me...”**

35. Members of South Kesteven District Council’s Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet and Full Council are asked to note the results of this consultation.

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