

**Cross Party Group on Animal Welfare in the Scottish Parliament**  
**55<sup>th</sup> meeting**  
**Room TG20/21**  
**6.00pm Tuesday 21 May 2013**

**MSPs:** Christine Grahame MSP (Convener)  
Claudia Beamish MSP (Deputy Convener)  
Clare Adamson MSP

**Associate Members:** Mike Flynn, Scottish SPCA  
John Patrick, Scotland for Animals  
Tina Warren, Scotland for Animals  
Joan Shepherd  
Donald Shepherd  
Patricia Saluja, University of Aberdeen  
Sandra Lawton, Dogs Trust  
Claire Cairney, Dogs Trust  
Adam Reed, University of St Andrews  
John Burns, World Horse Welfare  
Jamie Stewart, Scottish Countryside Alliance  
Denis Hearsum, Perth and Kinross Council  
John Robins, Animal Concern  
Victoria Brown, The Kennel Club  
Beverley Williams, Scottish Government  
Jim Wilson, Scottish Government  
Brian Hosie, British Veterinary Association  
John Brady, OneKind  
Libby Anderson, OneKind (Secretary)  
Andrew Blake, West Lothian Council  
Laura MacLeod, West Lothian Council  
Jean Fairlie, Weimaraner Rescue Scotland  
Michael Park, Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency  
George Leslie, Canine Concern Scotland Trust  
Karen Gray, Rabbits Require Rights  
Sophie Arnold, British Horse Society  
Tess Cecile, Edinburgh Vegetarian/Vegan Meetup  
Jennifer Dunn, League Against Cruel Sports  
Colin Shedden, BASC Scotland  
Wendy Seaton, Ethical Voice for Animals  
Bekky Inglis, Ethical Voice for Animals

**In attendance:** Emily Schiller, office of Clare Adamson MSP  
Jim Wilson, Scottish Government Justice Department

**Apologies:** Claire Baker MSP  
John Scott MSP  
Mauvis Gore, Marine Rescue International  
Tracy Shiells, Cats Protection  
Jacqui Cuff, Cats Protection  
Morton Houston, COSLA Animal Health and Welfare  
David Craig, World Horse Welfare  
Helene Mauchlen, British Horse Society

Philip Martin, Scottish Kennel Club  
Ross Allan  
Brian Robinson, Association of British Riding Schools  
Chris Draper, Born Free Foundation  
John Bruce, British Deer Society  
Fraser Henderson, Glo-Wild  
Patricia Neeson  
Edna Elliot McColl  
Jack Johnstone, Dogs Trust  
Laura Vallance, Dogs Trust

### **1. Welcome and introductions**

The Convener (CG) welcomed all present and invited new attendees to introduce themselves.

### **2. Apologies**

As per the attendance list.

### **3. Minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes of the meeting on 5 February 2013 were not approved. Amendments requested by Scotland for Animals and Animal Concern had not been fully incorporated. John Patrick (JP) stated Scotland for Animals' objection to the fact that their request that an admission by Beverley Williams that official claims made by the Scottish Government that it was in possession of legal advice confirming that mandatory CCTV could not be implemented under EU1099/2009 slaughter regulations were in fact false and no legal advice existed be included in minutes of 5/2/13 meeting had not been carried out.

The Secretary would correspond with the parties concerned and provide a further draft for approval.

### **4. Control of Dogs (Scotland) Act 2010: Update on implementation and enforcement, and related issues**

A paper from Scottish local authorities highlighting challenges experience in enforcing the Act was circulated and spoken to by Laura MacLeod (LM). *See Annex 1 for full paper and Annex 2 for summary of local authority enforcement activity.*

Clare Adamson MSP (CA) reported her concern about the withdrawal of North Lanarkshire Council facilities from dog training classes. In response to this her office had compiled a detailed report into public training facilities across local authorities. *See Annex 3 for full report.*

Points raised in the discussion included: the variable standard of qualification required to open a dog training class; public funding or other sponsorship for dog training; the cost of responsible pet ownership including dog training; and BHS initiatives to address the problem of attacks on horses by dogs.

On the need to improve compliance with Dog Control Notices (DCNs), members mentioned: dogs on DCNs being turned away by training providers as untrainable; the possibility of attaching a voucher to a DCN to cover private training classes; making enforcement agencies aware of owners who were subject to DCNs; the capacity of some local authority authorised officers to deal with dogs; and whether some local authorities were fully complying with the requirement to have an authorised officer.

On funding for implementation and enforcement, points included: funding for local authorities had not been provided for in the 2010 Act as it originated in a Member's Bill; additional burdens being placed on local authorities, with West Lothian stating that its budget had doubled and funds had to be moved to implement the legislation; the importance of local authorities providing dog training; and the need for training for authorised officers. Jim Wilson (JW) said that SG appreciated the difficulties regarding funding and if costs significantly increased there would need to be Concordat discussions.

It was noted that many authorised officers also performed other roles in councils although working with dogs was very specialised.

It was agreed that the legislation had been worthwhile with many people finding a resolution to problems with dogs, and that teething troubles were to be expected.

CA identified two tiers of problems with dogs. Some dogs needed high quality skilled training and socialising, and if local authorities were imposing this they should make facilities available. Others needed general social training, including responsible dog ownership. It was clarified that DCNs did not specify a level of training but could identify issues to be addressed, such as aggression.

It was agreed that there could be crossover between owners of out of control dogs and other problems in the community. Dogs Trust noted the increase in people buying dogs on a whim.

Discussions were being held by SG with local authorities and police. These might show an absolute need for further revised guidance but it was too early to conclude this was necessary.

**ACTION POINTS:** Convener/Secretary to: write to The Kennel Club, Scottish Kennel Club, local authorities and other associations for information about the availability of dog training and how clubs can be involved; correspond with LM and JW about issues raised in discussion including potential sponsorship for training, potential amendments to guidance, and authorised officer training; obtain list of training classes from Scottish Kennel Club.

## **5. Objection to Minutes**

JP stated that he was formally protesting the minutes of the previous meeting and had discovered a connection between SG and the Scottish Association of Meat Wholesalers.

## **5. Cross Party Group exhibition/event**

Applications had been submitted for two exhibition locations in the Scottish Parliament and it was expected the Group would be allocated places in early 2014. The exhibition would publicise the CPGAW, engage with MSPs and emphasise positive interaction with animals. Members interested in attending the stands were requested to inform the Secretary.

## **6. Any other business**

Suggestions for future discussion included: an update on the snaring provisions under s.13 of the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011; input from Vets Now/university veterinary hospitals and others about out-of-hours veterinary provision; responsible pet vending. Pet vending was selected for the next meeting.

**7. Date of next meeting**

24 September 2013 (to include AGM)

**Annex 1**  
**Local authority issues**

Cross Party Group on Animal Welfare  
 Meeting 21 May 2013  
 CONTROL OF DOGS (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010

---

The following comments have been provided to the Cross Party Group by local authorities, with the aim of highlighting the ongoing problems encountered whilst enforcing the Control of Dogs (Scotland) Act 2010, and suggesting solutions to these problems.

ISSUE ENCOUNTERED	POSSIBLE SOLUTION
<b>Resources</b>	
<p>The Control of Dogs (Scotland) Act is a positive step in the right direction. However the full resource implications were not considered when the Act was brought into force with regards to officer time, initial training etc. This has put a huge burden on the resources within Local Authorities. Enforcing the Act is very time consuming and cost intensive</p>	<p>Local Authorities need funding from the Scottish Government so that sufficient resources are available to put the legislation to full use.</p>
<p>Each Dog Control Notice (DCN) requires ongoing statutory monitoring. The more DCNs that are served, the greater the resource implications in terms of officers' time.</p>	<p>Local Authorities need funding from the Scottish Government so that sufficient resources are available to put the legislation to full use.</p>
<p>Monitoring of DCNs requires two officers as the breach of a notice is a criminal offence. Provision of two witnesses is problematic in councils where there is only one authorised officer.</p>	<p>Local Authorities need funding from the Scottish Government so that sufficient resources are available to put the legislation to full use.</p>
<b>Consistency of Delivery</b>	
<p>There is still a lack of consistency with the way the Act is being enforced. Some councils are still not enforcing the Act and others are dealing with hundreds of complaints per annum. For example, if a member of the public's dog is attacked by another dog, if you live in an area where the Local Authority is choosing not to use/enforce the legislation, the dog behaviour problem will not be dealt with.</p>	<p>Updating of the existing guidance is needed. This should make explicit to Local Authorities their responsibilities under the Act.</p>

<p>A postcode lottery therefore exists.</p> <p>Many Local Authorities are becoming confused by the terms “out of control” &amp; “dangerously out of control” with regards to who should deal with what.</p> <p>Some Local Authorities are choosing not to act if the dog has already acted “out of control” viewing this as a matter for the Police under the Dangerous Dogs Act. However this is not how the legislation was written and intended to be used.</p>	
<p>There is a lack of consistency in the way Local Authorities and the police are working together to enforce aggressive dog legislation. This results in a perceived ‘postcode lottery’</p>	<p>National Dog Warden Association Scotland and Scottish Government are endeavouring to agree with the police a common Scottish position.</p> <p>(Local agreements were in place in some areas before the recent change to Police Scotland. A national document is now required)</p>
<p><b>Training and Qualifications</b></p>	
<p>Concern exists regarding the qualifications / experience of the Authorised Officers enforcing the legislation within some authorities. In particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Officers who have no knowledge or experience of dog behaviour are enforcing the legislation; and</li> <li>• Within some authorities people who are scared of dogs are enforcing the Act.</li> </ul> <p>Neither situation is appropriate.</p>	<p>Clearer guidelines are needed from the Scottish Government stating what knowledge / qualifications / experience the authorised officer should have.</p>

Many staff have no formal enforcement experience.	
Lack of suitable training courses for Authorised Officers	National Dog Warden Association has run two training courses for authorised officers. There is a limit on the available time to run more of these workshops as the officers involved in running the events are all employed within Local Authorities.
<b>Legislative Issues</b>	
If the offending dog owner co-operates with the Local Authority the Act is relative straightforward to enforce. However if the offender chooses not to co-operate the Act gives Authorised officers very limited powers.	Amend the legislation to make it similar to The Dog Fouling Scotland Act 2003 whereby it is an offence not to provide personal details to authorised officers when requested.  Also allow authorised officers access to the DVLA database so that names and addresses of offenders using vehicles can be obtained.
Under the Act owners need to microchip their dogs within 14 days however the owner has 21 days to appeal the notice.	The Act needs to be amended to ensure consistency with the appeal timescale.
If a dog is currently chipped, but the details need to be updated, the microchip companies make the new owner wait for 28 days before this change can take place. This is because they will write to the old owner and give them the opportunity to contest the change in details. The 28 days does not tie in with the legislation as the legislation requires the dog to be chipped and the details up to date with 14 days.	The Act needs to be amended to take into consideration these timescales.
There is a requirement on the 'proper person' to advise the Local Authority if they change their name or address. However, there is no requirement for the 'proper person' to advise the Local Authority if they have re-homed the dog to another owner and the new address of that owner. Therefore, a potentially	The legislation needs to be amended to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• require the 'proper person' to notify the local authority of any re-homing of dogs subject to a DCN; and</li> <li>• make it an offence to fail to do so</li> </ul>

<p>dangerous dog can easily appear in a different local authority area.</p>	
<p>Most problems arise from poor owners rather than inherently problematic dogs . The act fails to tackle repeat problem owners. It has been found that one 'responsible persons' solution to the problem when served with a DCN is just to get rid of the dog. The owner then gets another dog. Where the owner has caused the problem in the first place with lack of training or poor husbandry, there is then the potential that they will re-create the problem with the new dog and the problem with the old dog has still not being solved.</p>	
<p><b>Formal Enforcement: General</b></p>	
<p>Compliance with DCNs is generally poor. The majority of people on whom a DCN is served do not have the money to undertake the requirements of a DCN. This is particularly where there are failures to get the dog chipped or attend effective training.</p> <p>However, the Procurator Fiscal is unlikely to view prosecution in such cases as being in the public interest.</p>	
<p>The Crown Office Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) has made many recommendations for DCNs to be served. However when these notices are breached, the COPFS does not see the matter as important to progress.</p>	<p>Scottish Government should discuss with COPFS why these cases are not being taken.</p> <p>If it is due to the quality of the reports submitted, further training in this field should be available. In many cases, staff have no formal enforcement experience.</p>
<p>A DCN recipient can avoid prosecution simply by moving home. If someone moves and doesn't let you know this is a breach of the notice. However if they cannot be traced, the case cannot be reported to the COPFS as the current address is needed in order to report case.</p>	
<p><b>Formal Enforcement : Gaps</b></p>	

<p>If the police are investigating a complaint under Dangerous Dogs Act but have insufficient evidence to report the case to COPFS this means no punishment has been given out for the behaviour of the dog and no restrictions are in place.</p>	<p>Either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the case should be passed to the Local Authority for consideration if a DCN is required, or</li> <li>the DDA or Control of Dogs Scotland Act should be amended to allow police officers to put a DCN on the owner to help prevent future attacks.</li> </ul> <p>Information sharing between LA and police would need to improve to ensure duplication does not exist.</p>
<p>If the police are investigating case under DDA but choose not to seize dog (this is becoming more frequent due to resource implications of seizing the dog) the owner /dog are free to do what they want until the case is heard in court.</p>	<p>Either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the case should be passed to the Local Authority for consideration if a DCN is required, or</li> <li>the DDA or Control of Dogs Scotland Act should be amended to allow police officers to put a DCN on the owner to help prevent future attacks.</li> </ul> <p>Information sharing between LA and police would need to improve to ensure duplication does not exist.</p>
<p><b>Guidance</b></p>	
<p>The Act advises that the notices need to be monitored by the authorised officers but provides no guidelines as to what is appropriate. ie some councils may choose to monitor once a week others once a year!</p>	<p>Clearer guidance needs to be provided for consistency.</p>
<p><b>Information Sharing</b></p>	
<p>Information sharing between Local Authorities and the police is a problem. Local Authorities are required to share information with the police under the legislation but there is no requirement for the police to share information. Members of the public are therefore having to provide two statements, which is time consuming for them and the authorities. Local interpretation of the data</p>	<p>There legislation should be changed to permit information sharing should by the Police.</p>

protection Act influences whether the Police are happy to share statements.	
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------	--

**Annex 2**  
**Implementation data**

Local Authority	Number of Dog Control Notices Served between 27/2/2011 to 26/2/2012	Number of Dog Control Notices Served between 27/2/2012 to 26/2/2013	Number of Investigations conducted during period 27/2/11 and 26/2/12	Number of Investigations conducted during period 27/2/12 and 26/2/13	Number of DCN breaches under Section 5 of the 2010 Act during period 27/2/11 and 26/2/12	Number of DCN breached under Section 5 of the 2010 Act during period 27/2/12 and 26/2/13	Number of appointed Authorised Officers
Aberdeen City Council	4	4	207	317	0	1	2
Aberdeenshire Council	3	14	142	198	1	2	3
Angus Council							
Argyll and Bute Council	7	5	28	43	0	0	9
Clackmannanshire Council	0	0	27	51	0	0	1
Dumfries and Galloway Council	2	4	23	17	0	0	3
Dundee City Council	0	0	97	136	0	0	6
East Ayrshire Council	6	9	26	17	2	0	6
East Dunbartonshire Council	6	0	23	20	0	1	15
East Lothian Council	11	4	12	5	0	0	1
East Renfrewshire Council	0	0	2	1	0	0	2
Edinburgh City Council	0	4	29	164	0	0	12
Falkirk Council	2	4	23	82	0	0	2
Fife Council	10	37	55	159	0	3	4
Glasgow City Council	1	1	7	5	0	0	40
Highland Council	2	8	16	38	0	1	2
Inverclyde Council	0	1	0	3	0	1	1
Midlothian Council	1	1	20	39	0	0	2
Moray Council	0	0	46	99	0	0	2
North Ayrshire Council	1	1	29	24	0	0	3
North Lanarkshire Council	0	0	18	13	0	0	3
Orkney Council	0	0	1	1	0	0	5
Perth and Kinross Council	0	1	49	36	0	1	2
Renfrewshire Council	0	9	36	89	0	1	1
Scottish Borders Council	4	8	23	35	0	1	2
Shetland Islands Council	4	2	4	9	0	1	6
South Ayrshire Council	0	0	3	21	0	0	2
South Lanarkshire Council	1	4	52	48	0	1	33
Stirling Council							
West Dunbartonshire Council	0	7	39	55	0	0	3
West Lothian Council	22	18	164	214	11	5	2
Western Isles Council	0	0	35	53	0	0	1
Total							

**Annex 3**

**Dog training in public facilities**

THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT

# Dog Training Activities in Public Facilities in Scotland

---

A report for  
Clare Adamson MSP

**Schiller E (Emily)**

**[May 2013]**

[A study examining the availability of public facilities for dog training activities across Local Authorities in Scotland.]

## *Executive Summary*

The purpose of this report is to collate information received from Local Authorities on the availability of public facilities for dog training activities in Scotland in response to a developing discussion in North Lanarkshire. The North Lanarkshire Council is considering banning dog training groups from the use of public facilities. This has been protested by long established dog training organisations in the area, many of whom claim the ban could result in the elimination of many dog training groups. Our study found that North Lanarkshire's ban would be in the minority of Local Authorities, as a majority of Councils indicated that they do allow the use of public facilities for dog training activities. For those Councils that indicated that they do not facilitate these kinds of groups, most identified independent private sector organisations with long established activities in private facilities. In examining previous scientific studies of dog behaviour modification, it has been proven that the most effective measure to increase control of dogs is participation in dog training activities. The absence of availability to formal instruction may increase the number of misbehaved dogs in a given area.

## *The North Lanarkshire Situation*

### *Committee Decision and Rationale:*

On Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> March, 2013 the North Lanarkshire Council's (NLC) Learning and Leisure Services Committee voted to end the use of school and community facilities by dog training classes. Cllr Logue assured dog groups that the Council will continue to honour existing lets and will support the transition to alternative accommodations.

The Committee did not consult with dog training groups prior to this decision (*Motherwell Times*, 20<sup>th</sup> March 2013).

Councillor Jim Logue, committee convenor, cited health and safety reasons in explaining the ban. He claimed halls were left in poor condition following lets to dog groups, evidencing residue of hair, dander and secreted saliva and urine which may cause allergic reactions for other public facility users. Furthermore, children cannot be in a hall within a short period of time after dog group usage, restricting the use of public centres (*Wishaw Press*, 20<sup>th</sup> March 2013).

Cllr Logue additionally explained in weeks following the decision and subsequent public outcry that dog lets require a cleaning regiment of up to one hour immediately following usage and an additional clean-up process the next day for up to two hours. Furthermore, Cllr Logue claimed other facilities users have indicated that they do not wish to let a hall in which dog related activities take place (*Wishaw Press*, 27<sup>th</sup> March 2013).

The NLC website cites two campaigns supported by the Dog Warden regarding local canine policy and legal practices. The 'Enough's Enough' campaign encourages citizens to report illegal dog fouling. The 'Good Dog' campaign provides information regarding general good dog ownership practice. The latter campaign's NLC Council website states a key tenant of responsible dog ownership includes acting to, "Train your dog in elementary obedience."

### *Public Reaction and Council Reconsideration:*

The committee decision was met by public outcry from dog groups in the local community, including letters written to the Wishaw Press and the Motherwell Times, organising of a public petition and protest demonstrations. Most complaints cite the lack of consultation prior to the decision as a primary grievance. Dog groups claim they generally leave the halls in good condition, and that they have experienced no past complaints from either the Council or other hall users (*Wishaw Press*, 27<sup>th</sup> March 2013)..

Dog groups are concerned this decision will force price increases, leading to a decrease in overall participation. The continuation of these classes may become less financially feasible, leading to a potential elimination of dog classes altogether. Classes generally employ volunteers and charge fees ranging around £2-£5 for participants, rarely accumulating annual profits. Some organisations claim to donate any profits to dog-related charities (*Wishaw Press*, 27<sup>th</sup> March 2013).

John Pentland MSP, representing Motherwell and Wishaw, wrote to North Lanarkshire Council's chief executive, requesting a Council response to the public condemnation (*Wishaw Press*, 27<sup>th</sup> March 2013).

On 28<sup>th</sup> March, disgruntled dog owners staged a demonstration outside the Motherwell Civic Centre. The same day, the full council voted to suspend the ban on dog training classes within local authority premises and to instead enter into consultations with dog clubs to reach a satisfying solution for all. Furthermore, the council rejected the Learning and Leisure Committee's rationale for the ban relating to health and safety factors. Cllr David Baird cited financial reasons as the sole motivation for continuing examination of the ban. This claim was contested within the Council and outwith (*Wishaw Press*, 4<sup>th</sup> April 2013).

*Consultation Meetings and Failure to Reach Resolution:*

A consultation meeting was held 16<sup>th</sup> April in Coatbridge and attended by representatives for a numerous local dog clubs and elected officials. The meeting lasted almost two hours and no resolution was reached. Talks were scheduled to continue in May, but have not yielded satisfactory resolution for dog group advocates (*Wishaw Press*, 24<sup>th</sup> April 2013).

The debate continues to be articulated through letters to the Motherwell Times and the Wishaw Press, wherein dog group advocates argue the majority of dog training classes are run by dedicated volunteers and attended by responsible dog owners. The elimination of the availability of public facilities for this purpose would result in the elimination of many of these programs, facilitating a decrease in responsible dog ownership in the North Lanarkshire Council area. Council members in favour of the ban protest that rising costs of keeping these lets are unsatisfactory to the NLC budget and that these groups can easily transition to alternative accommodation.

## *Council Involvement with Dog Training across Local Authorities*

### *Purpose and Method:*

To consider the North Lanarkshire Situation, we sought to collate information on Council involvement with dog training classes across local authorities in Scotland. The purpose of this exercise was to ascertain whether the decision within the NLC was unusual, especially given the provisions mandated by the Control of Dogs (Scotland) Act 2010. The Act requires Local Authorities to employ an 'authorised offer' to 'instruct and advise others in matters relating to the control of dogs'. Furthermore, the Act makes provisions for the serving of a 'dog control notice' for situations wherein a dog acts out of control.

Section 2(6)(e) states that a dog control notice may require the proper person 'attend and complete a course of training in the control of dogs'. Given that participation in a formal dog training course may potentially be required by the NLC Dog Warden in concurrence with the Control of Dogs (Scotland) Act 2010, it could be argued that Councils are further responsible for ensuring the existence and maintenance of formal dog training classes in their respective localities. We sought to examine how Councils interpreted their role in relation to this provision through statistical analysis.

To examine the distribution of Council involvement in dog training classes and the availability of public centres for private dog group usage, we wrote to the 32 Local Authority's Chief Executives inquiring after Council policy regarding dog group lets in public facilities. From this practice, we received a 78% information return rate, including a response from NLC.

We then collated the information and augmented the missing information wherever possible with independent research. From this practice, we found conclusive information for 30 Council areas including North Lanarkshire, a 93.8% coverage of the whole of Scotland.

### *Findings:*

Of the 29 Local Authorities--not including North Lanarkshire--for which we found conclusive information, a 69% rate (20 councils) allow the use of public facilities for dog training activities. A rate of 13.8% of Councils directly host dog training classes. All 4 Councils that host dog training classes also allow the letting of public facilities to private sector dog groups.

In the 9 Councils that do not allow dog training activities in public facilities, 8 indicated the existence of an established private sector market with private facilities available in the Local Authority. Only the Western Isles Council indicated that there is no private sector market for this purpose. However, the Western Isles Council website includes a list of Council property lets to private groups published in February 2013. This list names the 'Western Isles Dog Training Club'. No further information on the existence of this club or its interactions with the Council could be found.

In the 8 Councils that do not allow dog training activities in public facilities and that identified the existence of a private sector market, Angus Council and the Scottish Borders Council indicated that the Dog Warden provides advice and support to private dog groups in the area. Although the Council does not directly fund, host, or make public facilities available to these groups, they do interact with them, and Council officials will attend sessions at private facilities. It is possible the remaining 6 Councils that do not allow dog training activities in public facilities and that identified the existence of a private sector market also interact with private sector organisations, but this information was not

available. Every Council, however, employs at least one authorised officer in accordance with the purposes of the Control of Dogs (Scotland) Act section 1(6).

*Conclusions:*

These statistics provide insight into how Councils interpreted and implemented the provisions set out in the Control of Dogs (Scotland) Act 2010. Every council has acted in accordance with section 1(6) of the Control of Dogs (Scotland) Act, which requires each Local Authority to employ an authorised officer for the purpose of enforcing the Act. The level to which this officer interacts with dog training activities, however, varies.

According to our findings, an 86.2% majority of Councils do not interpret the Council's remit, in relation to local control of dogs, to be the provision of government-hosted dog training classes. 69%, however, do allow the use of public facilities for private sector groups. Of the 31% of Councils that do not allow dog training activities in public facilities, at least 2 provide some level of support for private organisations. Furthermore, in many of these cases the private organisations have existed for a number of years independent of the government of government facilities.

It can therefore be concluded that the North Lanarkshire Council decision to ban the use of public facilities for dog training activities is in the minority across all Local Authorities in Scotland. Although our study only accounts for 29 of the 31 other Local Authority areas, incorporating the 2 missing Councils as well as North Lanarkshire into calculations—each scored as 'not allowing the use of public facilities for dog activities'--still yields a minority percentage of 37.5%.

Furthermore, the decision to alter the existing relationship between dog training groups and the Council is highly irregular. For those Councils wherein public facilities are not available for dog training activities, there is usually evidence of an established, long-standing private sector market with private facilities. For these areas, the lack of lets to dog training groups is not necessarily a ban. Often, it is instead the result of a lack of necessity by the private sector and dog owners in the area.

### Chart of Local Authority Allowances

	Facilities available for private sector use	Council run classes available
	20	4
	69%	13.80%
<b>Council</b>		
<b>Aberdeen City</b>	X	
<b>Aberdeenshire</b>	X	X
<b>Angus</b>		
<b>Argyll and Bute</b>	X	
<b>City of Edinburgh</b>	X	
<b>Clackmannanshire</b>	X	X
<b>Comhairle nan Eilean Siar*</b>		
<b>Dumfries and Galloway</b>	X	
<b>Dundee City</b>	X	
<b>East Ayrshire</b>	X	
<b>East Dunbartonshire</b>	X	
<b>East Lothian</b>	X	
<b>East Renfrewshire</b>	X	
<b>Falkirk</b>	X	
<b>Fife</b>		
<b>Glasgow City</b>	X	
<b>Highland</b>		
<b>Midlothian</b>	X	
<b>Moray</b>	X	
<b>North Ayrshire</b>		
<b>Perth and Kinross</b>		
<b>Renfrewshire</b>		
<b>Scottish Borders</b>		
<b>Shetland Islands</b>		
<b>South Ayrshire</b>	X	
<b>South Lanarkshire</b>	X	X
<b>Stirling</b>	X	X
<b>West Dunbartonshire</b>	X	
<b>West Lothian</b>	X	

\*Correspondence with the Western Isles Council indicated they do not allow dog training activities groups to use public facilities, but a list of Council property lets to private groups published in February 2013 on the Council website names the 'Western Isles Dog Training Club'. No further information on the existence of this club or its interactions with the Council could be found.  
<http://194.83.245.248/commed/letting/authorisedclubs/index.asp>

### Benefits of Participating in Formal Dog Training Classes

### *Dog Training Classes are Proven to Increase Obedience:*

To conclude this study of the availability of public facilities for dog training activities, we include a note on the benefits of participation in formal dog training classes. Scotland has a high number of dogs. According to the Pet Food Manufacturers Association, 24% of households in Scotland have at least one dog (PFMA, 2010-2012). This is higher than the average of the entirety of the UK, wherein 22% of houses have at least one dog. The National Records of Scotland estimated that in 2010 there were 2.36 million households in Scotland (NRS, 2011). This means there is approximately 566,400 dogs in Scotland. It is crucial to the health and safety of society to ensure that the high number of dogs in Scotland receive adequate training.

Numerous scientific studies have proven that participation in formal dog training classes improve control of dogs and dog behaviours (Kobelt et al, 2003; Clark and Boyer, 1993; Jagoe and Serpell, 1996; Bennett and Rohlf, 2006).

Bennett and Rohlf (2006) found the strongest correlation in their research of the relationship between dog and owner behaviours to be a negative correlation between 'training engagement' and scores on the 'disobedient' subscale; the more attention given to formal training exercises yielded the best behaviours. Furthermore, 'training engagement' was moderately negative. Clark and Boyer (1993) also proved that dogs who participated in dog training classes, regardless of breed, age or any other factor, behaved better. This is consistent with subsequent studies.

### *On Microchipping as a Solution:*

England is introducing measure to be enacted in 2016 which would require the microchipping of all dogs. This is intended to provide an additional resource for RSPCA to return strays to their proper owners and to foster a greater sense of responsibility among owners for their pets, leading to more responsible care.

Politicians in Scotland have considered enacting similar legislation. The Scottish Government, however, insists there is no evidence microchipping will increase safety or positively modify behaviour of dogs in Scotland. David Bowles, the RSPCA's head of public affairs, has also indicated that the move will not significantly affect dog behaviour. The SSPCA, Dogs Trust and various other dog-related charities, however, have welcomed the move as a positive advancement if not a solution to all dog-related problems. Many Local Authorities and private sector dog training groups in Scotland offer microchipping services.

While microchipping will help the control of dogs, it will not serve to significantly decrease misbehaviour. Participation in formal dog training classes remains the most effective strategy to decrease disobedience. The lack of access to participation in these classes, either because of price or unavailability of services, may result in a higher number of less obedient dogs in a given area.

## References

- Bennett, P., and V. Rohlf. "Owner-companion Dog Interactions: Relationships between Demographic Variables, Potentially Problematic Behaviours, Training Engagement and Shared Activities." *Applied Animal Behaviour Science* 102.1-2 (2007): 65-84. Print.
- Clark, G.I., Boyer, W.N., 1993. The effects of dog obedience training and behavioural counselling upon the human-canine relationship. *Appl. Anim. Behavior. Sci.* 37, 147-159.
- "Dogs in England Must Be Microchipped from 2016." *BBC News UK* 6 Feb. 2013: n. pag. Print.

"Estimates of Households and Dwellings in Scotland, 2010." *Gro-scotland.gov.uk*. NATIONAL RECORDS OF SCOTLAND, n.d. Web.

Jago, A., Serpell, J., 1996. Owner characteristics and interactions and the prevalence of canine behaviour problems. *Appl. Anim. Behav. Sci.* 47, 31-42.

Kobelt, A.J., Hemsworth, P.H., Barnett, J.L., Coleman, G.J., 2003. A survey of dog ownership in suburban Australia-conditions and behaviour problems. *Appl. Anim. Behav. Sci.* 82, 137-148.

"Letting of Comhairle Premises." *Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar*. N.p., n.d. Web. 18 May 2013.

Macnab, Scott. "Compulsory Microchips for All Dogs in Scotland." *The Scotsman* 3 Apr. 2013: n. pag. Print.

Millar, Stefanie. "Council Kicks out Canine Classes." *Motherwell Times* [Motherwell] 20 Mar. 2013: n. pag. Print.

Miller, Graham. "Barking Mad over Halls Ban for Dogs." *Wishaw Press* [Wishaw] 20 Mar. 2013: n. pag. Print.

Miller, Graham. "Council Take Lead towards Re-think." *Wishaw Press* [Wishaw] 3 Apr. 2013: n. pag. Print.

Miller, Graham. "Dog Club Want a Change of Heart." *Wishaw Press* [Wishaw] 27 Mar. 2013: n. pag. Print.

Miller, Graham. "Higher Costs for Dog Training Club." *Wishaw Press* [Wishaw] 24 Apr. 2013: n. pag. Print.

"North Lanarkshire Council." *Dog Warden*. N.p., n.d. Web.  
<<http://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=2394>>.

"Regional Pet Population Based on 2010 to 2012 Research." *PFMA.org.uk*. Pet Food Manufacturing Association, n.d. Web.

SP Bill 29 Control of Dogs (Scotland) Bill [as passed at Stage 3] Session 3 (2010).