



## **Decision Session - Executive Member for Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods**

**To:** Councillor Carr (Executive Member)

**Date:** Monday, 23 May 2016

**Time:** 3.00 pm

**Venue:** The Thornton Room - Ground Floor, West Offices (G039)

**7. Annex of Written Representations**

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## Decision Session – Executive Member for Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods

Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2016

### Written Representations

Agenda Item	Received From	Comments
<p>Holgate Dock - Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) Consultation Outcome.</p>	<p>James Karran, Local Resident</p>	<p>The evidence of dog fouling provided for the report is of very low quality, It contains obvious examples of double counting (the same deposits being counted on consecutive days then included in the total) and provides no proof that this was from dogs and for example cat, fox or even human faeces. Given the free-range nature of cats and the frequent high levels of litter (food scraps to attract foxes from the adjacent railway estate), some seemingly sadly the detritus of rough sleepers left in the bushes it seems quite possible that any or all of those alternatives are real possibilities. It is merely presumed and reported (by an inexperienced and interested witness?) to be dog faeces.</p> <p>The report places a lot of emphasis on the public health hazard posed by Toxocariasis spread by (among other vectors, foxes and cats included) faeces from infected dogs. While this can undoubtedly be serious the NHS describes Toxocariasis as rare and typically causing only mild symptoms (<a href="#">link below</a>). Infection risk can be mitigated by basic hygiene measures. In an academic study on the epidemiology of Toxocariasis no correlation between the density of the infectious T.Canis eggs in domestic gardens and household pet ownership was found. They are widely present in the environment, mobile and the density does not correlate with the presence of pets. Another found that only 0.5% of regularly wormed adult dogs is a source of infectious eggs (<a href="#">link below</a>). While this may not have been the case historically (many studies reporting higher figures are 30 or 40 years old now) it is likely to be close to the reality for dogs exercised in this location. Studies also predict that as dog faeces collection approaches 90%, a situation which seems likely for Holgate Dock given the very well used bin and the relatively low level of un-collected faeces (6 unique deposits reported in approximately one month) the dominant source of T.canis eggs becomes the fox and to a lesser degree, cats (<a href="#">link below</a>). Banning Dogs from the park is unlikely to significantly alter the already low risk posed by this disease.</p> <p><a href="http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Toxocariasis/Pages/Introduction.aspx">http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Toxocariasis/Pages/Introduction.aspx</a></p>

		<p><a href="http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0304401712006826">http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0304401712006826</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.canineconcernscotland.org.uk/#!toxocara-canis-survey/c18ml">http://www.canineconcernscotland.org.uk/#!toxocara-canis-survey/c18ml</a></p> <p>Holgate Dock is unique in the area being a sizeable, flat, grassy space that is safe and fully enclosed away from main roads. It is an extremely valuable resource to the community including dog owners. This resource is funded by all and should as best as is practicable remain available to all. An outright ban is a disproportionate solution to the perceived problem and in reality unlikely to solve that problem, it penalises the responsible and law abiding and is still likely to be flouted by those few who break existing laws by not picking up after their dogs.</p> <p>The issue of school children feeling intimidated by dogs could quite reasonably be tackled by excluding dogs from the park while it is in use by the school. This would cost no more to sign or enforce than an outright ban and is a very reasonable compromise solution.</p> <p>The St Paul's Terrace park is not a suitable alternative, it is not enclosed and has little flat ground (outside of the areas already covered by dog bans) making it difficult for those with mobility problems. It also frequently contains broken glass making it unsafe for dogs. My dog has previously been injured by this in this park.</p> <p>Likewise the land behind the Fox pub is not enclosed making it unsuitable for exercising dogs off the lead due to the adjacent trunk road and cycle lane posing a hazard to the dogs and the dogs to traffic. It is also waterlogged for the majority of the winter and given over to a wonderful wild flower meadow for the majority of the summer.</p> <p>Hob Moor is not meaningfully enclosed and at more than one mile round trip from Holgate dock is an unsuitable for people with mobility difficulties or those exercising elderly dogs. The presence of large grazing animals can also make this venue intimidating and potentially unsafe for dogs and owners alike.</p>
<p>Holgate Dock - Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) Consultation Outcome.</p>	<p>Sharon McDonagh Local Resident</p>	<p>I would like to make the following points with regard to the report published in favour of a total dog ban at Holgate Dock</p> <p><b>EVIDENCE OF DOG FAECES</b></p> <p>With regard to the alleged "evidence" and the table highlighting the dates of the visits and faeces found. Having worked in Police Intelligence for 20 years I can honestly say this is the poorest evidence I have seen and certainly would not hold up in a court of law and should be retracted for reasons outlined below. Firstly, a person should have been appointed to visit the land who is totally impartial to the case and photographic evidence along with dates and times should have</p>

been collated otherwise this is not evidence. The manner in which this alleged evidence has been obtained is unfair, incorrect and certainly not transparent. The table shows 'double counting' and is also incorrect.

21st March states that 2 faeces were found, then it states on the 22nd that the same 2 were found but no others. On 15th April it states 3 were found, 2 being from the previous day however according to the table no visit was made on the 14th which proves my point.

A more prudent point to make is that if the council is so concerned with Toxocariasis and children contracting the disease then why were the alleged faeces left in situ by the person reporting the findings especially knowing that school children would be using the land?

I would also like to add that a number of dog owners, including myself, visited the land every day during the period shown on the table of "evidence" and that no such dog faeces was found present. There was however a large amount of litter present which we picked up and disposed of.

#### TOXOCARIASIS

There is a significant focus on Toxocariasis in the Council report, however it is very rare with only a few cases of illness due to infection per million of the population per year. In the years since the creation of Holgate Dock (1996) there have been no actual cases of Toxocariasis reported. The parasite which causes Toxocariasis is most commonly present also in cats, foxes and other wildlife, with foxes having the higher parasite load than a domestic dog. Whilst dog faeces is unpleasant, it is not, and never has been an issue with disease on this land. Children and adults are more likely to injure themselves on the litter and broken glass that is prevalent on the land than actually contracting Toxocariasis. There are a number of cats in the area of Holgate Dock as well as foxes.

The report states that the school have no other access to land for sports but in actual fact the park at Upper St Pauls Terrace has a tarmac area that is solely built for the purpose of sports which is a few minutes walk from the school.

There is however Government research that is published on the Council's webpage with regard to potential air pollution relating to the road and adjacent railway that reduces the intelligence of children and actually kills people in York.

[https://www.york.gov.uk/info/20059/air\\_pollution/162/air\\_pollution\\_levels\\_in\\_york](https://www.york.gov.uk/info/20059/air_pollution/162/air_pollution_levels_in_york)

		<p><b>ALTERNATIVE AREAS PROPOSED BY THE COUNCIL</b></p> <p><u>Upper St Pauls Terrace Park</u> - the park is not fenced off so it is not safe to exercise dogs off lead and regularly contains broken glass. It is also a designated children's park and as such many dog owners do not feel it is an appropriate area. I would also like to add that there are plans to demolish this park to make way for a road to the proposed development on the railway land.</p> <p><u>Wasteland behind the Fox Pub</u> - again this area is not fenced off and is adjacent to a main road. It has a large amount of litter on the land making it unsafe for dogs and is waterlogged for half of the year.</p> <p><u>Hob Moor</u> - this land is not fenced off and contains grazing livestock so it is unsafe to take dogs whether they are on lead or off. It is also a mile round trip which is too far for owners who are elderly, for elderly dogs and for professional people who need to exercise their dogs before work and who don't have access to a vehicle.</p> <p><b>DNA REGISTER</b></p> <p>This would actually be a fantastic step forward by the Council to alleviate the bigger problem of dog fouling on the streets of York and on other areas of public land and would also generate revenue. It is a simple scheme where all dogs would be required to register and as such would receive a 'dog tag' which is visible on their collars/harnesses along with their ID tags. I feel that this option has not fully been investigated properly by the Council. If they are to enforce the dog ban on the land then how are they going to actually enforce it? If wardens are to monitor the land re the dog ban then surely the same could be applied for the DNA register.</p>
<p>Holgate Dock - Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) Consultation Outcome.</p>	<p>Mrs Lynne Scott, Local Resident</p>	<p>This issue is not of dog walking but 'fouling' which includes not only dogs but also cats and wild animals such as urban foxes which are in the area, I for one have seen them. Therefore the areas identified as 'dog walking' areas are irrelevant and the matter in hand is Holgate Dock. Why now, and why has the school not petitioned all local residents? Why not a meeting at the school to discuss the 'problem'? Why petition only the parents, some of whom do not live in the area. As a whole the residents are pleased to see Holgate Dock used for school games and also fetes at which they spend money. It feels to the residents that the school want exclusivity on Holgate Dock. However, it is a public space and the public have a right to use it.</p> <p>I am a dog owner but until November last year had never had a dog as a pet. Since moving into Watson Street and overlooking Holgate Dock, I have witnessed many residents exercising their dogs and have never witnessed anyone not clear up. The documented evidence of the times</p>

fouling was noted – 8 actually as an entry was double counted from the previous day – was compared with the number of packages cleared up and deposited in the dog litter bin. This is unfair as there is provides no comparison. As there were so few documented incidents is it impossible for the area to have checks before an activity? Once a day when being used would be enough? Surely the area would have to be checked anyway to ensure no cat or fox excrement or broken glass is present. It is not an onerous job, we have walked the area on several occasions and have found not one deposit only litter. In the documented evidence a deposit was described as evidence of diarrhoea– this could be an indication of fox excrement as it can be notoriously slack, is irresistible to dogs and therefore a menace to dog owners too.

Realistically unless CCTV cameras are installed, which would need to be monitored at all times by a member of City of York staff, to exclude dogs from Holgate Dock would require the installation of fencing along the wall fronting the roadside, adequate locks on the gates and the installation of something like a cattle grid to deter dogs walking onto the ground. As has been considered by other Councils in the UK. This excludes the public from the area and results in Holgate Dock becoming a school playing field. Will the school agree to pay for its maintenance or do I as tax payer have to pay for the maintenance of a public area which I cannot use?

Re the reduction of Crime and Unsocial Behaviour in the area. Does the number of times a football has been kicked over the wall and hit my front door, front window and broken a door chime constitute unsocial behaviour. As well as the possibility of parked cars being hit by footballs. Therefore under the terms of the PSRO would all activity on the Dock be banned?

Before this issue goes too far would it not be more sensible to sit down face to face to discuss a way forward rather than through surveys and legal proceedings. Acting in this way will I believe damage the relationship between residents and the school. A PSRO is in place for 3 years. Can a decision be put back to a future Council Meeting to allow such a discussion between the school and local residents? The school could be enhanced by liaising with the local residents in this way.

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