

Parish Information Sheet



Ref: 02/2026

For use by Somerset Council

From:	Matt Cloke Environmental Crime Manager
--------------	---

Date:	15th January 2025
--------------	-------------------------------------

To:	All Clerks
------------	-------------------

Somerset Council's Consolidation and Consultation Strategy for Effective Dog Control

Introduction and Aims

This briefing has been prepared for our Members and Parishes to provide an overview of Somerset Council's intention to:

- 1) consolidate all existing Somerset dog control PSPOs across the county
- 2) introduce a new dog control PSPO in the Taunton Deane area
- 3) request Members and parishes review details of existing dog control PSPOs in their areas, prior to the official consultation launch

The briefing explains the proposed changes, timelines, actions needed and details of the upcoming consultation.

The aim of this exercise is to ensure consistent enforcement of dog control measures and to inform councils of their roles and opportunities within the framework.

Background: Existing Dog Control PSPOs and Enforcement Challenges

PSPOs are legal tools available to local authorities under the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 to address behaviours detrimental to community quality of life. In Somerset, multiple PSPOs relating to dog control have been implemented over

recent years, these include measures for dog fouling, exclusion of dogs from children's play areas and beaches, and requirements for dogs to be kept on leads in specific locations e.g. ornamental gardens, Vivary Park Taunton, and on all land where human remains are buried.

We currently have a structure where separate dog control PSPOs exist for different areas and offences – and this presents significant challenges. Each order must be reviewed, extended, or discharged every three years, creating administrative burdens and inconsistent enforcement across the county. This has led to confusion for residents and limited the effectiveness of the council's approach to tackling dog related anti social behaviour.

Somerset Council Proposal: Consolidation and Consistent Enforcement

To address these challenges, the council proposes to consolidate existing dog control PSPOs within Somerset, plus introduce a dog control PSPO into the Taunton Deane area, where one has not previously existed.

In addition, we plan to replace the current patchwork of orders that exist across the county with two comprehensive PSPOs, covering all relevant dog control measures.

This consolidation exercise will streamline enforcement, simplify public understanding and ensure resources are used efficiently and effectively.

The council's strategy aims to reduce the frequency of administrative reviews and enable more effective partnership working between Somerset Council's authorised officers, our Members, colleagues in our city, town and parish councils, local communities, the police, and other external stakeholders.

Details of Proposed Dog Control PSPOs

- Dog Fouling and Dogs on Lead by Direction:

The first proposed PSPO will address dog fouling in all public spaces open to the air in which the public have free access, making it an offence not to remove dog faeces. It will also empower authorised officers to require any dog to be put on a lead if deemed necessary for safety or nuisance reasons. This approach enables targeted intervention where problems arise, rather than blanket restrictions.

- Dog Exclusion Zones and Mandatory Dogs on Leads in Specific Areas:

The second PSPO will designate certain areas as dog exclusion zones, such as children's enclosed (fenced) play areas, ornamental gardens, cemeteries, burial grounds, and high footfall locations like Vivary Park in Taunton. In these places, dogs must either be excluded or kept on leads at all times, safeguarding vulnerable spaces and enhancing the enjoyment of public amenities for all residents and visitors.

Consultation 2026

The council is committed to a transparent and inclusive process, so this communication will be the first of many.

The enforcement team, working with comms colleagues and the senior parish development officer, will keep stakeholders informed at each stage of the process with written briefings, online meetings, FAQs, plus a dedicated inbox for Member and parish clerk queries during the pre-consultation period.

This piece of work is anticipated to take many months to complete - it's a huge undertaking and we want to get it right.

Pre-Consultation Feedback

Before launching the public consultation, we are asking our Members and Parishes to review details of any existing dog control PSPOs in their areas.

Please note we are referring to **dog control** PSPOs only (not other PSPOs).

This pre-consultation period will remain open until **Friday 20 March 2026**.

You will find full details here: <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/environment-and-food-safety/public-spaces-protection-orders/>

- Is the information correct and complete?
- Would you like to suggest any potential inclusions, prior to the main consultation going live this summer? For example, a burial ground, or new play spaces. that meet the criteria i.e. enclosed by a continuous fence (barrier) and for children under 5 years.
- Is there any additional information you'd like the enforcement team to know about?

These questions are important. Any amendments needed to the current dog control listings must be identified and applied before the consultation is published.

Once the formal public consultation begins, changes, updates and revisions can no longer be added.

All feedback should be sent to: consultations@somerset.gov.uk

Consultation goes LIVE

When the formal consultation is published, full details, timelines and a web link will be circulated to all key stakeholders. A press release will be issued to the media and social media notifications posted throughout the campaign, for wider awareness.

We anticipate this will be during the **summer of 2026**, and that comments will be accepted for up to **six weeks**.

A series of interactive maps will also be made accessible for public viewing online, showing the addresses of the relevant sites and who has responsibility for them.

The consultation will be hosted on our Citizen Space pages. You may wish to bookmark the link for future reference: Somerset Council - Citizen Space

All Somerset Council Elected Members, our city, town and parish councils, along with local residents, relevant external stakeholders, partners, and visitors, will be invited to share their views on the proposals, to ensure the orders reflect local needs and priorities.

We'll be asking our Members and Parishes to help us with the promotion of the consultation, and with community participation, to ensure a broad representation of views are captured. We thank you in advance for your assistance with this.

Key Clarifications

Dog fouling is covered everywhere the public has free access, so councils do not need to list these areas.

The dog control PSPOs will supersede local bylaws where applicable, and enforcement remains with Somerset Council, not parish/town councils.

All councils, including those recently consulted (ie Mendip), are being asked to participate, to capture any changes that may have happened.

Timeline

JAN 2026 - Notification

Members and parishes receive notification of dog control PSPO consolidation programme, plus plans for a public consultation.

Parish Clerk Briefing (Teams Meeting) 21/01/26.

JAN 2026 – Friday, 20 March 2026

Members and parish councils review details of the existing dog control PSPOs, and feedback any additional information or potential inclusions for the main public consultation.

Summer 2026 - Consultation launch

Public consultation, complete with interactive and accessible maps, goes live for **six weeks** (launch date to be confirmed).

All key stakeholders engage, spread the word and encourage local communities to submit their responses.

Public consultation closes after six-week statutory period.

Results and feedback published.

For more information contact:

Name: Matt Cloke

Email: matt.cloke@somerset.gov.uk