Have your
Say!

New rules for cats?



Keeping of Animals, Bees and Poultry Bylaw

Consultation Document

We're updating the bylaw that protects the public from potential nuisance caused by animals (other than dogs) and aims to protect public health and safety. We want to hear what you think of our proposed chages.

We're accepting feedback until Wednesday 15 July.

ItsOurPlace.nz

Ashburton DISTRICT COUNCIL

Why do we have a bylaw?

While there is no legal requirement to have a bylaw for the keeping of animals, bees and poultry, the Local Government Act 2002 empowers councils to create bylaws that:

- protect the public from nuisance.
- protect, promote, and maintain public health and safety; and
- minimise the potential for offensive behaviour in public places

The purpose of our bylaw is to ensure that the keeping of animals, bees and poultry does not create a nuisance or risk to our community's health and safety.





This bylaw does not cover dogs.

Dog control matters are regulated by the Dog Control Bylaw and Policy.

We're currently reviewing these documents, so visit *itsourplace.nz* to learn more and provide feedback.

itsourplace.nz/dogs





The bylaw covers the following:



Nuisance, like excessive noise or smell, caused by animals in an urban area



Restrictions on keeping pigs in an urban area



The need for a licence to keep stock in an urban area and what the licence conditions are



Information on the moving of stock in urban areas, including riding or leading a horse



Rules around keeping poultry in urban areas



Rules for beekeeping in the district



NEW - Rules for responsible cat ownership



Regulation on feeding feral animals



Restriction on the number of animals when they cause a nuisance to others



NEW - Council's powers to prevent animals to become a nuisance or risk to health



What happens when the bylaw is breached

Have your Say!

Submissions close Wednesday 15 July

What's being proposed?

We think our current bylaw is generally working well and contains the right tools to address the animal related issues we commonly see in our district.

However, there are a few issues that have emerged since the last review in 2016 and are currently not addressed in the Bylaw.

Introducing rules for the responsible ownership of cats.

There are growing calls across New Zealand to consider how cats can be responsibly managed. This is to protect native wildlife and biodiversity, but also to improve the welfare of cats. We're proposing to introduce new rules that reflect what responsible cat owners already do, such as microchipping and desexing.



A new section to address animals causing a nuisance or risk to public health or safety.

Another issue is the Council's ability to act when animals are causing a nuisance or becoming a risk to public health. For example, when stock escapes and ends up on a public road where it could cause an accident. We're proposing to add a new section to address these situations and update the purpose of the bylaw to reflect this change.



Other smaller changes

Finally, we've reviewed and refreshed the rest of the document to make sure it's clear, consistent with other bylaws and includes any updated practices which have worked effectively elsewhere.



So, we're proposing to make two key changes and a number of other 'minor' changes. You can read more about these on following pages and we'd love to hear your feedback on each topic.

You can find the full draft bylaw and have your say at *itsourplace.nz*



Have your Say!

Submissions close Wednesday 15 July

Key change one:

Animals causing nuisance or becoming injurious to health.

We're proposing to add a new section to better address animals that cause a nuisance or become a risk to public health or safety. This addition will also explain how Council would deal with these situations.

Why?

In recent years, Council has had to deal with situations where animals or stock are repeatedly escaping from enclosures and not only causing a nuisance, but also creating a risk of accidents. Under the new clause, Council can direct the owner of the animals to fix or improve fencing, or reduce the number of animals. If the person fails to do this after being given notice, Council could have a contractor do the required work and make the owner responsible for the associated costs.



With the addition of this new section, we're also proposing to update and expand the purpose of the bylaw so it remains consistent.

The purpose of this bylaw is:

- ✓ to outline requirements for the keeping of animals, bees and poultry. The requirements are deemed necessary for the protection of neighbouring property owners and/or occupiers from nuisance.
- ✓ **NEW** - to maintain and promote public health and safety

Jargon Buster

'Injurious to health' is the phrase we use in the bylaw to address situations where animals could hurt people or make them unwell.



Pros and cons

Why does this help?

- With the new section, the Bylaw will help manage situations where stock repeatedly escapes and creates a risk to the public.
- It makes the rules easier to understand
- It creates a more consistent document

What could be tricky?

- Having additional rules may reduce flexibility sometimes.
- Council could be perceived as being overly restrictive.

What choices are there?

PREFERRED OPTION

Make the changes as proposed. This is our preferred option.

Make other changes. Council will also consider any additional ideas from public feedback. Depending on changes made (if any), further consultation may be required.

Make no changes to the existing bylaw. We could leave the bylaw unchanged but would miss the opportunity to improve public health and safety.

Key change two:

Keeping of cats

While there is no national legislation for cat management, there has been a significant increase in the number of councils adding cat regulation to their bylaws and we're proposing to bring in new rules around responsible cat ownership in our district.

The proposed rules would include the requirement for all cats over the age of four months to be desexed and microchipped, and for the microchip to be registered with the New Zealand Companion Animal Register.

There would be an exemption for registered cat breeders and situations where desexing would put the cat at risk due to its age or poor health.

Council is also proposing a rule against the feeding of cats other than your own, where that feeding:

- encourages stray or feral cat populations,
- results in nuisance or fouling, or
- adversely affects wildlife or public health.

Temporary feeding for the purpose of trapping or capturing feral and stray cats would be allowed.

Why?

Members of our community have called for the introduction of cat management rules to help protect our local biodiversity. Our braided rivers, for example, are rich in biodiversity and home to many endangered birds and lizards, but their proximity to residential areas means cats often roam freely and hunt in these environments.

Pest trapping is used in riverbeds and other areas to protect our native species and we want to ensure domestic cats are safeguarded when they accidentally end up in a trap. Some traps are equipped with sensors, which prevent them from triggering when a cat's microchip is detected.

When a cat is caught in a trap, it will be scanned by volunteers. If microchipped and registered, it can be returned to its owner. However, if that cat is not chipped and does not appear to be a pet, it may be humanely put down. This poses a risk for unchipped domestic cats.

Cats that are microchipped and registered can also be scanned by vet clinics and other authorised agencies, making it much easier to reunite lost cats with their owners.

The requirement to desex cats is designed to improve animal welfare by preventing unwanted litters. Unneutered companion cats can cross-breed with the stray population, which in turn, feeds the feral cat population (see how we define types of cats over the next page).

Cats can also pose a risk to health as carriers of tuberculosis, toxoplasmosis and parasites which are harmful to other animals and humans. Keeping a control on stray and feral cats in the district will help prevent these diseases from spreading.



Registering cats?

The New Zealand Companion Animal Register is a national database for microchipped pets. It is not operated by Council, but can be accessed by vets and other authorised agencies to help reunite lost pets with their owners. There is a one-off $15 lifelong registration fee per animal and the profits are used to promote animal welfare causes in New Zealand.

These new rules wouldn't require cats to be registered with the council, pay annual registration fees or wear a tag.

Will Council start checking companion cats if they are desexed or microchipped?

No, the proposed rules are intended as a statement about responsible cat ownership and reflect what most cat owners in our district already do. Council intends to take an educational approach rather than allocate additional resources for active enforcement.

Pros and cons

Why does this help?

- Adding the rules to the bylaw will explain to the community what it takes to be a responsible cat owner.
- It helps protecting our companion cats.
- It helps protecting the biodiversity in our district.
- The desexing will help in managing the cat population in our district.

What could be tricky?

- People might feel Council is overreaching when it comes to regulating cats.
- There could be a cost for cat owners to comply by the new rules by having their cat desexed, micro-chipped and registered.

What choices are there?

PREFERRED OPTION

Make the changes as proposed. This is our preferred option.

Make other changes. Council could adopt only some of the proposed changes or incorporate new ideas from public feedback. Depending on changes made (if any), further consultation may be required.

Make no changes. This is not our preferred option as it misses an opportunity to promote responsible cat ownership and help protect local biodiversity.



Types of cats:

Companion cat - means a common domestic cat (including a kitten unless otherwise stated) that lives with humans as a companion and is dependent on humans for its welfare.



Stray cat - means a companion cat that is lost or abandoned. Stray cats tend to live in close proximity to humans, where many of their needs are indirectly supplied by people. Stray cats are likely to interbreed with unneutered companion cats.



Feral cat - means a cat which has none of its needs provided by humans. Feral cats generally live away from areas with lots of people. The feral cat population fluctuates largely independently of humans and is self-sustaining. Last year, feral cats were added to Predator Free 2050 list of pests.



Have your Say!

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Other changes

Council is also considering other changes that are smaller or more administrative in nature. We welcome your feedback on these.

Section	Proposed change
2. Purpose	'The requirements are deemed necessary for the protection of neighbouring property owners **from nuisance'**. Added the wording 'from nuisance' Adding the purpose related to new section 14 'to maintain and promote public health and safety'
3. Related documents	Added sentence explaining paragraph
	Added additional related documents
5. Definitions	**Feral animal**: added definition
	Nuisance: Updated definition
	Added explanatory note on Dogs
	Pet: Added details on definition of Pet
	Urban area: updated definition to match definition in Explanatory Bylaw
	Stock: update & correction definition
6. Nuisance from animals	Removed 'birds or poultry' from title (included in definition of animal) Changed Noise to Nuisance (covered in definition nuisance) Moved to start of bylaw
	Added 'in an urban area' for clarity and consistency. Removed 'noisy' as this is covered by the definition of nuisance.
8. Stock keeping	Updated title for consistency throughout Bylaw
	Added 'other than areas zoned Residential D under the Ashburton District Plan' for alignment with the District Plan
	Included the paragraphs (8.2, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5 that are not considered 'conditions' from the **Bylaw Advisory Note *(First Schedule – Stock licencing conditions)*** to this section.
	8.5 – added paragraph referencing the Bylaw Advisory Note (First Schedule) that stipulates the Stock licencing conditions.

Section	Proposed change
9. Moving of stock in urban areas	9.1 Added paragraph to reference the 'driving of stock'
	9.2 moved from the **Bylaw Advisory Note** ***(First Schedule – Stock licensing conditions)*** to this section and updated for clarity. Removed reference to stock licence which is replaced with a new generic reference to breaching the bylaw in the advisory note.
	9.3 Added reference to a person having control of animals in urban area.
10. Poultry keeping	10.1 paragraph added for consistency with other sections
	10.2 reference to maximum number of poultry added for clarity
	10.3 updated to state poultry can only be kept in a poultry house
	10.4 Note added
	10.5 'such poultry unit' changed to 'it'
11. Beekeeping	11.2 changed 'shall' to may
	11.3 New paragraph stating the national requirement of beekeepers to be registered with The Management Agency (National American Foulbrood Pest Management Plan), not Council. This is a legal obligation under the Biosecurity Act 1993.
12. Encouraging nuisances by feral animals	12.1 included feral cats
	12.2 rephrased for clarity 12.2 bullet 2 – replaced 'permanently removing it' with dispose of the animal(s) humanely
16. Breach of the bylaw	Adding a clause to reference consequences of breaching the bylaw for clarity and consistency with other bylaws.
First Schedule – Stock Licence Conditions. Bylaw Advisory Note	Paragraphs that are not conditions moved to section 8 'Stock keeping' or 9 'Moving of animals in urban areas'
	5. updated paragraph on horse manure to be relevant to all stock
	6. added a reference to a breach of the bylaw

More information about these changes and the full draft bylaw can be found at ***itsourplace.nz***



About bylaws

When councils are making or changing bylaws, we're required to make sure that the rules are necessary, comply with the law and protect people's rights and freedoms.

Has Council looked at other ways to fix the problems?

Yes. When a bylaw is reviewed, the Council must think about four possible choices:

1. Change the current Bylaw
2. Make further changes to the current bylaw
3. Revoke the Bylaw and make a brand new one
4. Keep the Bylaw exactly the same (roll over)

After considering these options, Council decided that changing this current Bylaw (Option 1/2) was the best way to address current issues. Revoking and creating a whole new bylaw (Option 3) would be costly and less efficient, and revoking the Bylaw (Option 4) or keeping the Bylaw the same would not see any improvements to the management of nuisance by animals, bees and poultry in our district.

Section 155 tests

Council must also consider three legal tests under Section 155 of the Local Government Act 2002 when reviewing bylaws. Council considered these tests and decided that the proposed amendment to the Bylaw is:

- the best available way to fix the problems; and
- the best available form of bylaw; and
- creates no implications under the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act (NZBORA)



Submissions close Wednesday 15 July

What happens next?

Monday 15 June

Consultation opens

Council will accept feedback from the community on the proposals.

Wednesday 15 July

Submissions close

This is the last day for the community to submit their feedback.

Tuesday 18 and Wednesday 19 August

Public hearing and deliberations

Those who gave feedback can choose to speak to their submission in person. Council will then consider all feedback received and decide on any further changes.

Wednesday 23 September

Council adopts bylaw

Council will adopt the final version of the bylaw.

Have your Say!

What's the best for our community? Let us know!

Submissions close Wednesday 15 July

Fill out the attached short survey and return it via:

FREEPOST
Ashburton District Council
Freepost 230444
PO Box 94
Ashburton 7740

IN PERSON
Drop it off at:
Ashburton District Council
2 Baring Square East

You can also provide feedback:

ONLINE
ItsOurPlace.nz

EMAIL
submissions@adc.govt.nz

The easiest way to provide your feedback is online at

ItsOurPlace.nz

Have your Say!

Keeping of Animals, Bees and Poultry Bylaw

Feel free to answer as many questions as you like. You don't need to complete every question. You can view the full draft bylaw and policy at ***itsourplace.nz***

Submissions close Wednesday 15 July

1 Do you support the draft Keeping of Animals, Bees and Poulty Bylaw as presented?

◯ **Yes** ◯ **No** *Please explain:*

_____

_____

_____

2 Key change one – Animals causing nuisance or becoming injurious to health.

'Injurious to health' is the phrase we use in the bylaw to address the situation when animals could hurt people or make them unwell.

We are proposing to add a clause to help Council deal with situations where animals become a nuisance or injurious to health. For clarity and consistency we also propose to reflect that in the Bylaw purpose:

2.1 Do you support the proposal add a clause on animals become a nuisance or injurious to health?

◯ **I support this change** ◯ **I don't support this change**

Please explain why you chose that option and/or any other changes you'd like to propose.

_____

_____

_____

2.2 Do you support the proposal to reflect this change in the bylaw's purpose:

◯ **I support this change** ◯ **I don't support this change**

Please explain why you chose that option and/or any other changes you'd like to propose.

3 Key change two – Keeping of cats

We are proposing to add rules to encourage responsible cat ownership such as microchipping, desexing and registering all cats over four months old with the New Zealand Companion Animal Register, and a restriction on feeding stray cats.

Do you support the rules on keeping of cats?

◯ **I support this change** ◯ **Partially support this change** ◯ **I don't support this change**

Please explain why you chose that option and/or any other changes you'd like to propose.

4 Other changes

We are proposing a range of other smaller changes on pages 12-13.

Do you support the other changes we are proposing?

◯ **I support these changes** ◯ **I don't support these changes**

Please explain why you chose that option and/or any other changes you'd like to propose.

5 Further comments

Do you have any further comments you'd like to make?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Have more to say? Feel free to attach additional pages to your submission.
You can also provide your feedback online at ***itsourplace.nz***

YOUR DETAILS

Name:

Organisation (if applicable):

Address (optional):

Phone: Email:

Do you wish to present in support of your submission at the hearing?

(if no boxes are ticked, it will be considered that you do not wish to be heard)

☐ **Yes:** The hearing is expected to be held in Hine Paaka *(Council Chamber)* on Tuesday morning 18 August 2026. Please note that hearings will be live-streamed to our online channels.

If yes, do you wish to present: ◯ In Person ◯ Virtually

☐ **No:** I do not wish to speak in support of my submission and ask that the following written submission be fully considered.

Please note that submissions are public documents and will be made available on Council's website, including names of submitters (but not contact details). Find out more at ashburtondc.govt.nz/privacy

Submissions presented in the form of a petition or accompanied by multiple signatures will be processed as a single submission.

Learn more and share
your thoughts at

ItsOurPlace.nz

Ashburton
DISTRICT COUNCIL