



Dog bylaws in Bournemouth parks 2009

Report of key findings

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Background

In 2005 a new act created additional powers for dog bylaws in green spaces.

Bournemouth Borough Council is considering whether or not to change from it's existing byelaw arrangements and wants to include public opinion in the decision making process.

The 2005 Act includes 5 main actions:

- Limit the number of dogs on particular sites (number of dogs per person). This is a new action.
- Fines for dog mess. This would be a renewal of existing arrangements.
- Power to request dogs be kept on leads (if request made by council or police officer). This is a new action.
- Designated area where dogs must be on leads. This would be a renewal of existing arrangements (with some amends to the particular sites).
- Dog ban in particular areas. This would be a renewal of existing arrangements (with some amends to the particular sites).

To aid the decision about whether or not change the bylaws, BBC collected data about how Bournemouth residents currently use our dog walking areas as well as gather opinions around the proposed new bylaws actions.



Methodology

- For this piece of research it was important to collect information from a representative sample of residents. Therefore the chosen method was telephone interviews.
- 500 telephone interviews were conducted by an independent telephone research agency (Hill Taylor Partnership).
- Quotas were set to ensure that respondents were representative of the borough population in terms of age, gender and postcode.
- Interviews were conducted between 10th and 20th November (inclusive).
- To ensure both working and non-working respondents were included, interviews took place between 1pm and 8pm.
- The data from the interviews was sent to the Council's Consultation and Engagement Team for analysis.

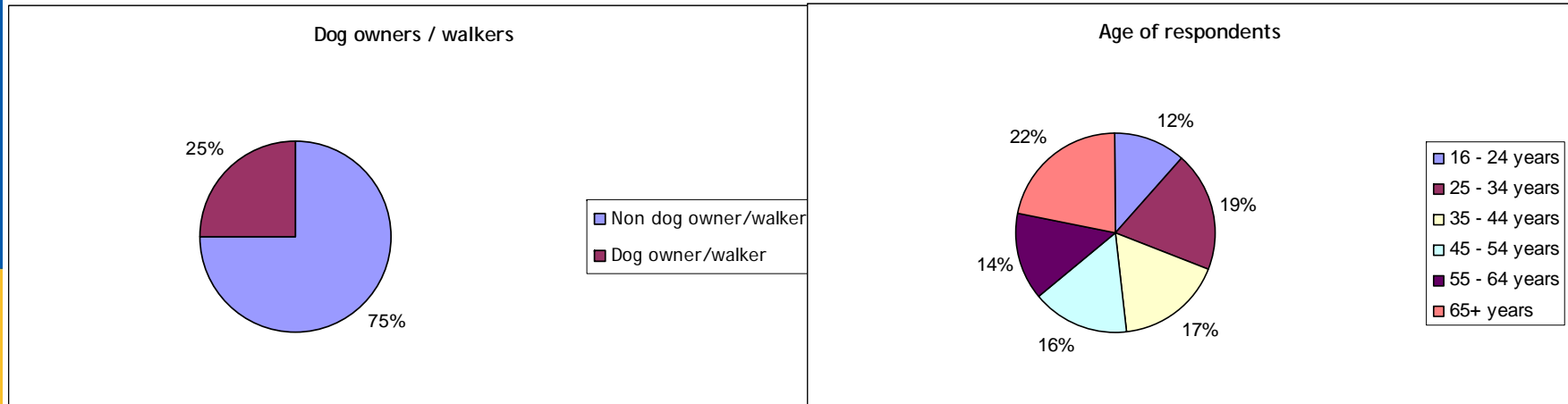
Key Findings 1

- Respondents generally support the two proposed new dog bylaws in Bournemouth parks.
- The proposal to give the power to request dogs are put on leads was supported by almost all respondents
- The proposal to limit the number of dogs walked at one time showed strongest support from those who don't own/walk dogs and older respondents.
- Those who support the proposal to limit the number of dogs suggested the limit should be up to 3 dogs.
- Those who didn't support the proposal to limit the number of dogs suggested the limit should depend on various factors including the size, training, behaviour, breed of the dogs.
- Respondents felt that the Council should use a combination of enforcement and education to deal with those who disobey any dog bylaws (existing and proposed new ones).

Key Findings 2

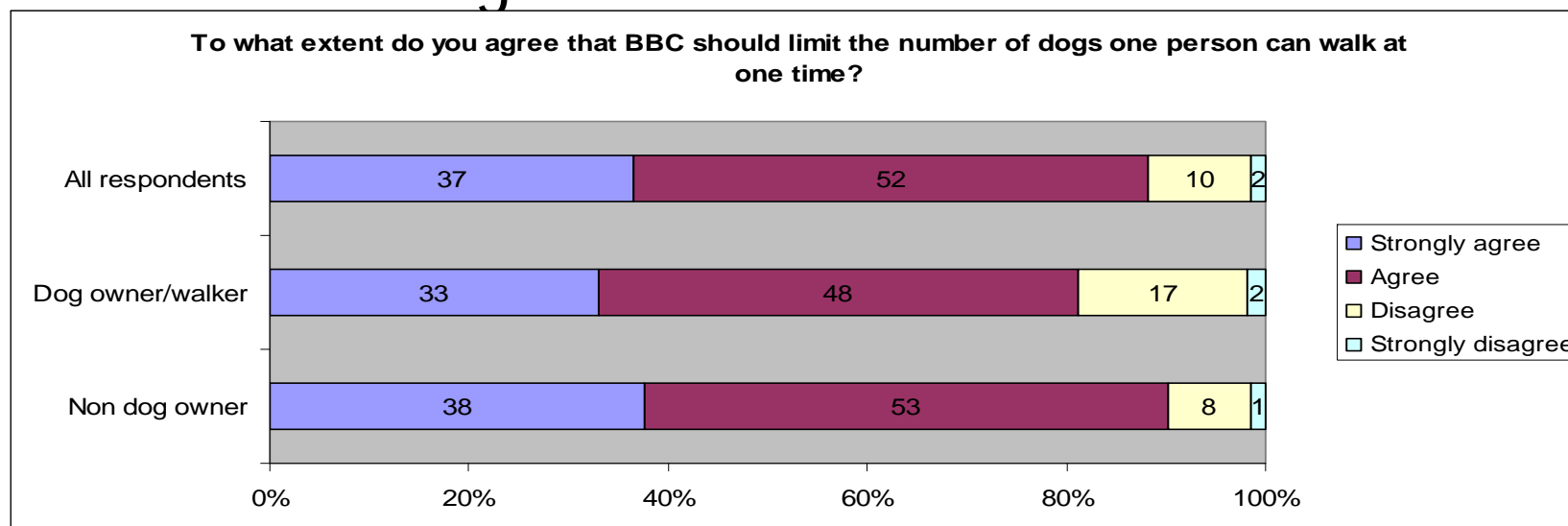
- Respondents had mixed opinions about how accessible various areas should be for dogs.
- Enclosed sports areas/facilities were generally preferred to be dog free.
- Play areas/playparks were generally preferred to be dog free, although younger respondents showed some support for dogs to be allowed on leads.
- Open areas were generally preferred to have full dog access. Support for this was particularly high amongst those who own and/or walk dogs.
- Nature reserves and unenclosed sports pitches did not show any clear preference around dog access. The opinions about these areas varied by dog ownership and by the age of the respondent.
- Almost all dog owners say they always pick up after their dog(s). However, over one in ten dog owners/walkers mention instances when they think it is okay for people not to pick up after their dogs.

Profile of respondents



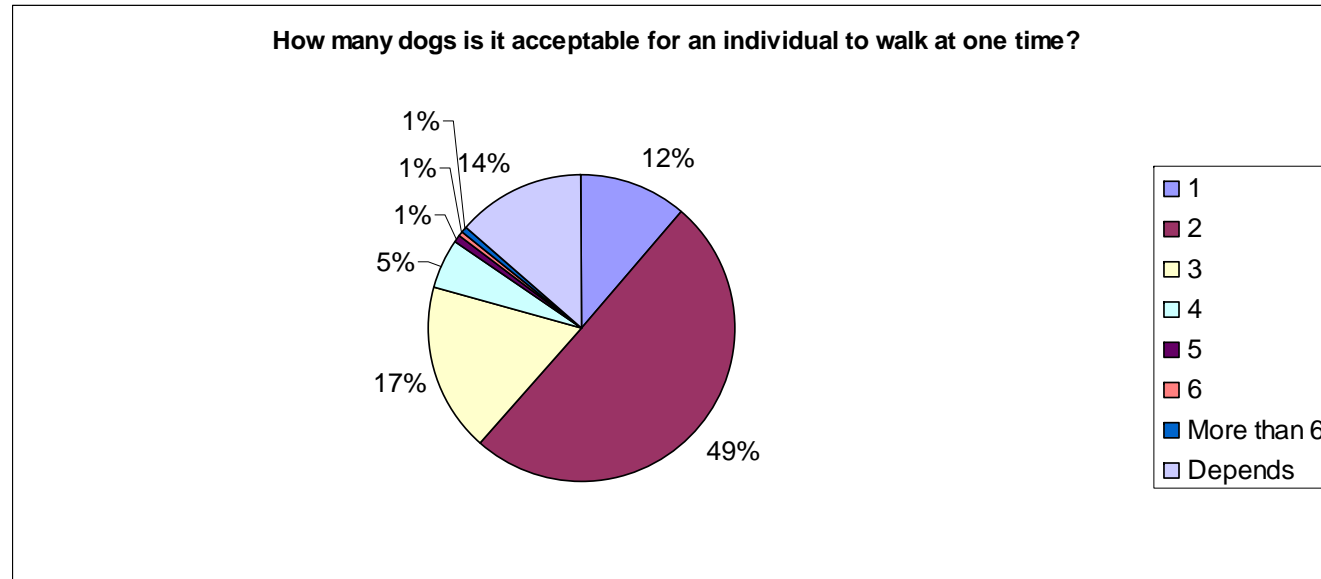
- One quarter of respondents (25%) were dog owners and/or walkers.
- Respondents were from a variety of age categories.
- There was a fairly equal split of male and female respondents; 48% male and 52% female.
- Around one tenth of respondents (13%) of respondents had a long standing illness, disability or infirmity.
- Almost all (97%) of respondents were White British.
- There were no significant differences in the profile (age, gender, etc) of those respondents who were dog owners/walkers and those who were non dog owners.

Proposed new bylaw action 1: Limit the number of dogs walked at one time



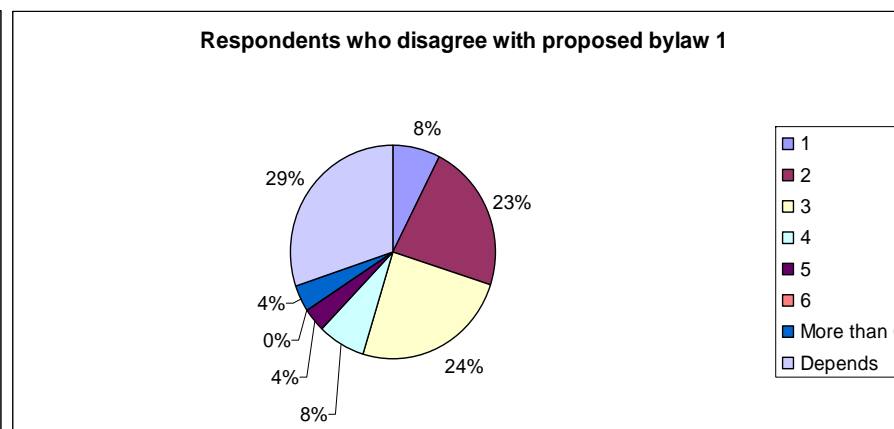
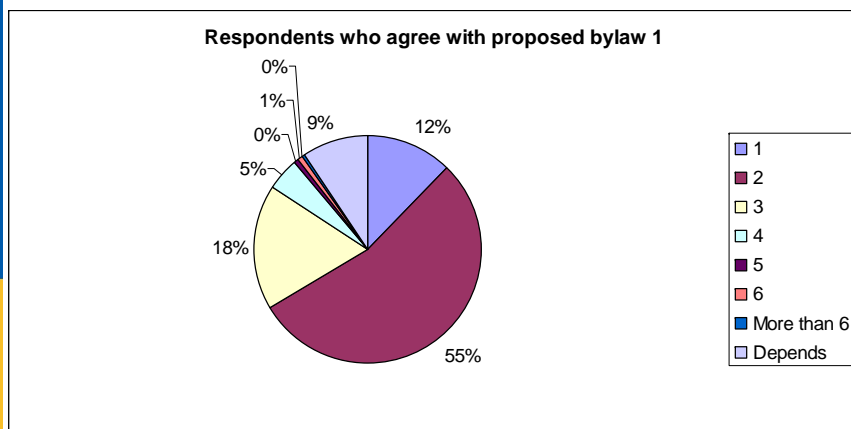
- Respondents were asked whether they agreed with the proposed new bylaw action to limit the number of dogs which an individual can walk at any one time.
- Around nine in ten respondents (89%) said they agree or strongly agree with this proposal.
- The level of support varied by dog ownership;
 - Around four fifths (81%) of dog owners/walkers agreed with the proposal compared to nine in ten (91%) of non dog owners/walkers.
- Support also increased with age; from 77% of 16-24 year olds to 96% of those aged 65+ years.

Number of dogs walked



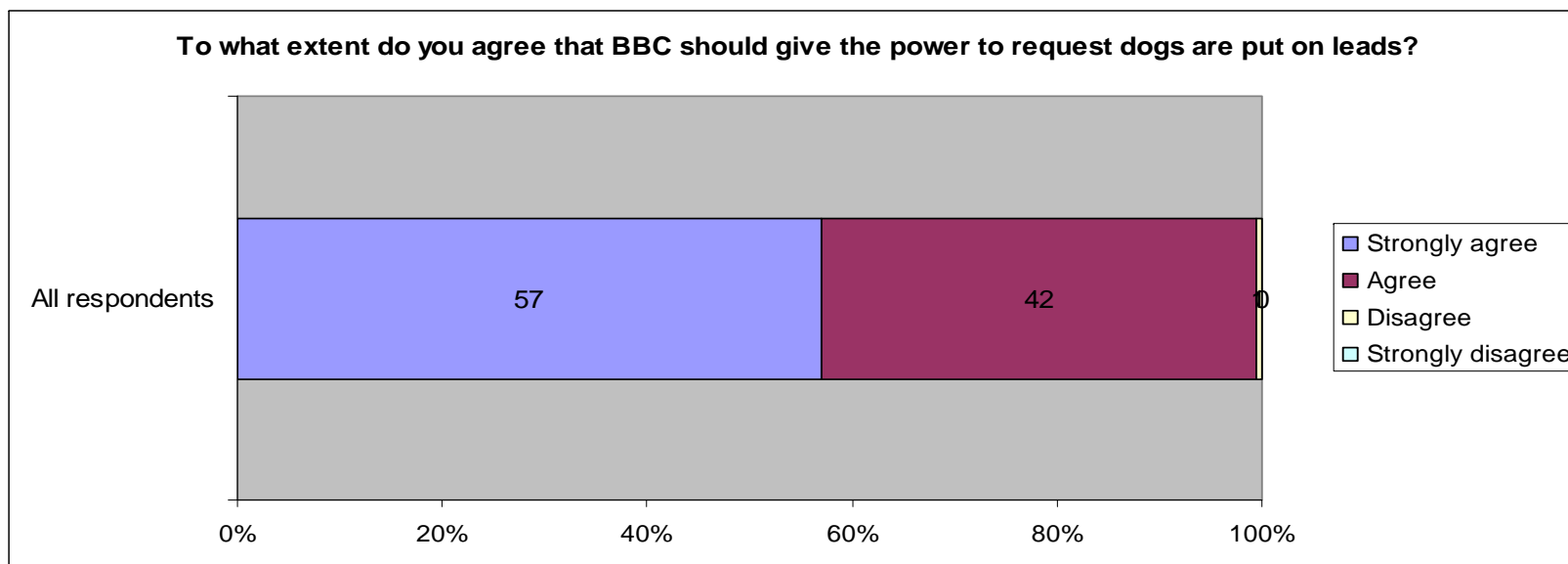
- When asked how many dogs it was acceptable to walk at one time, around four fifths (78%) thought it was acceptable to walk up to 3 dogs at one time. The majority response was 2 dogs with around half of respondents (49%) giving this response.
 - Non dog owners were more likely than dog owners/walkers to think it was acceptable to walk only one dog at a time; 14% compared to 6%.
 - Similarly, males were more likely than females to respond only one dog; 15% compared to 8%.

Number of dogs walked continued



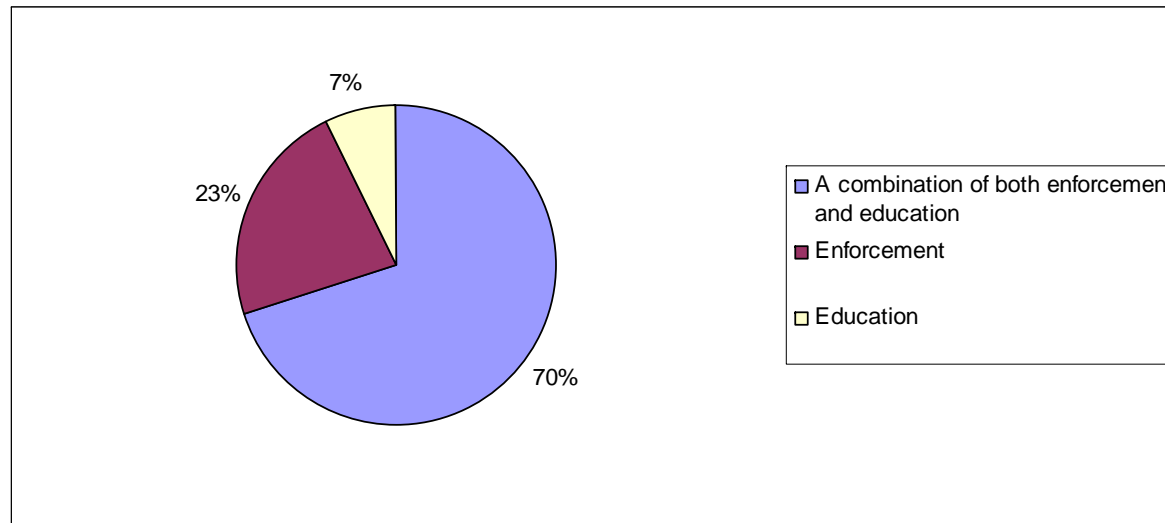
- There is a difference in opinion about the number of dogs it is acceptable to walk depending on whether the respondent agrees or disagrees with the proposed bylaw to limit the number of dogs people can walk.
- Those who disagree with the proposed bylaw are more likely to answer 'it depends' than those who agree with the proposed bylaw when asked how many dogs should be walked at one time; 29% compared to 9%.
- The main aspects it would depend upon were the size of the dogs and the training/behaviour of the dogs. A small number of respondents thought it should depend on the breed of dogs and the person walking the dogs.

Proposed new bylaw action 2: power to request dogs put on leads



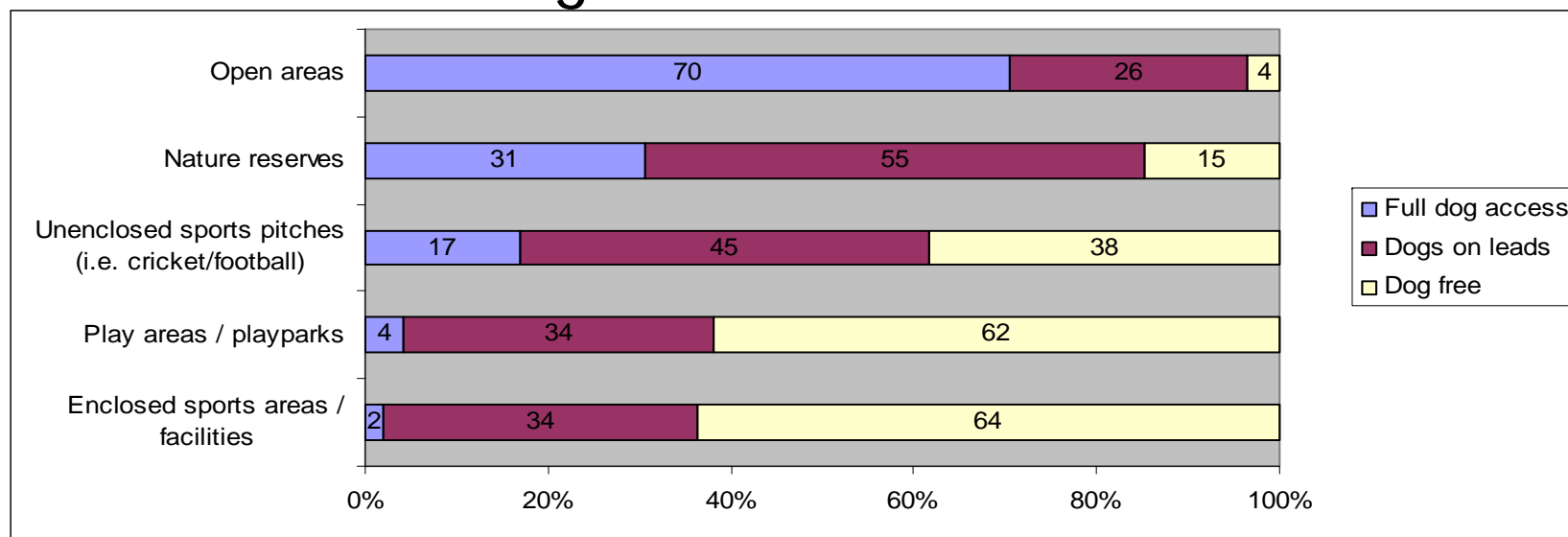
- Respondents were also asked whether they agreed with the proposed new bylaw action to give council officers and police officers the power to request dogs are put on a lead if the behaviour of the dog is likely to cause alarm or distress to others.
- Almost all respondents (99%) agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal.
- Support for this proposal was consistently high regardless of dog ownership and/or the profile (i.e. age, gender etc) of the respondent.

Dealing with those disobeying bylaws



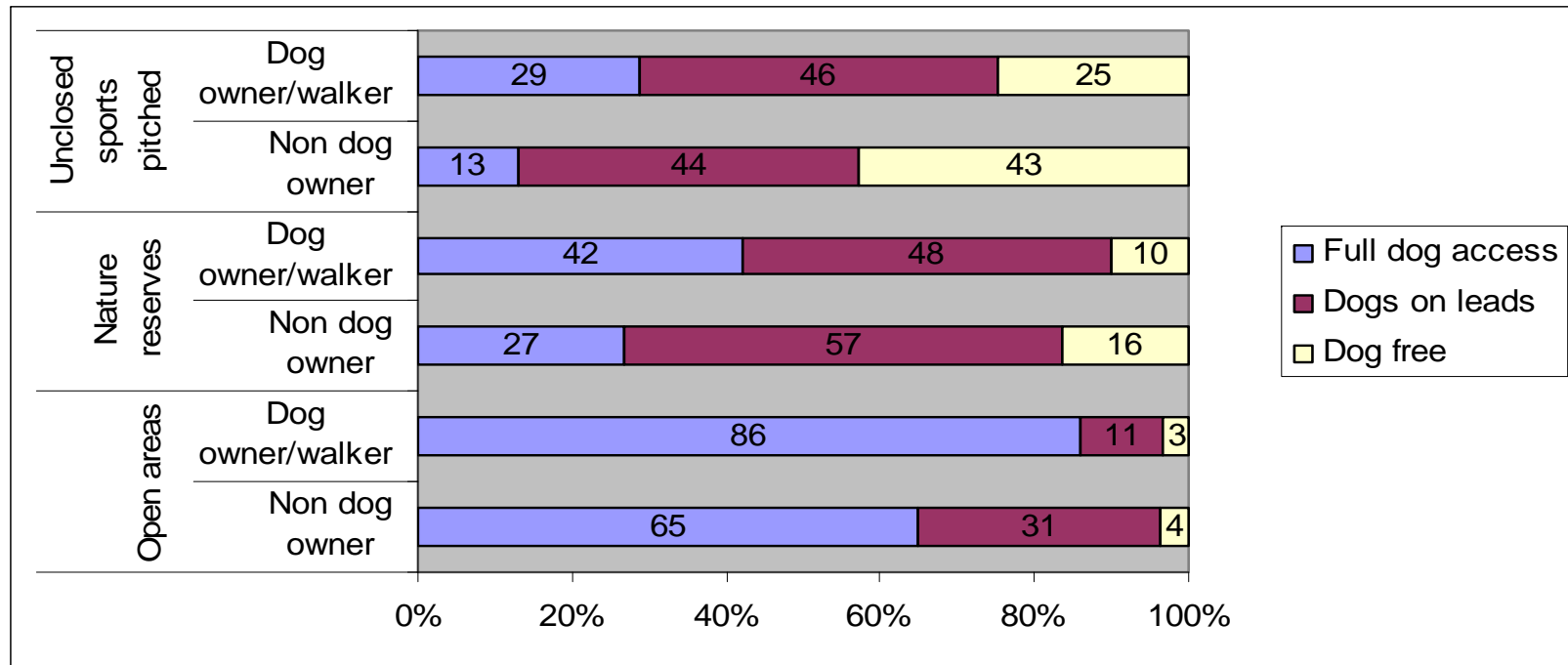
- Respondents were asked how they thought the Council should deal with those who disobey the existing dog bylaw actions (designated 'dogs on leads' areas, designated 'no dogs' areas and no dog fouling) as well as the proposed new ones should they be introduced.
 - The majority of respondents (70%) thought the Council should use a combination of enforcement and education, at the officer's discretion.
 - Around a quarter (23%) thought the Council should use enforcement i.e. fines/fixed penalty notices.
 - Less than one in ten (7%) thought the Council should use education i.e. give people warnings/information.
- This was consistent regardless of dog ownership and/or the profile of the respondent.

Dog accessible areas



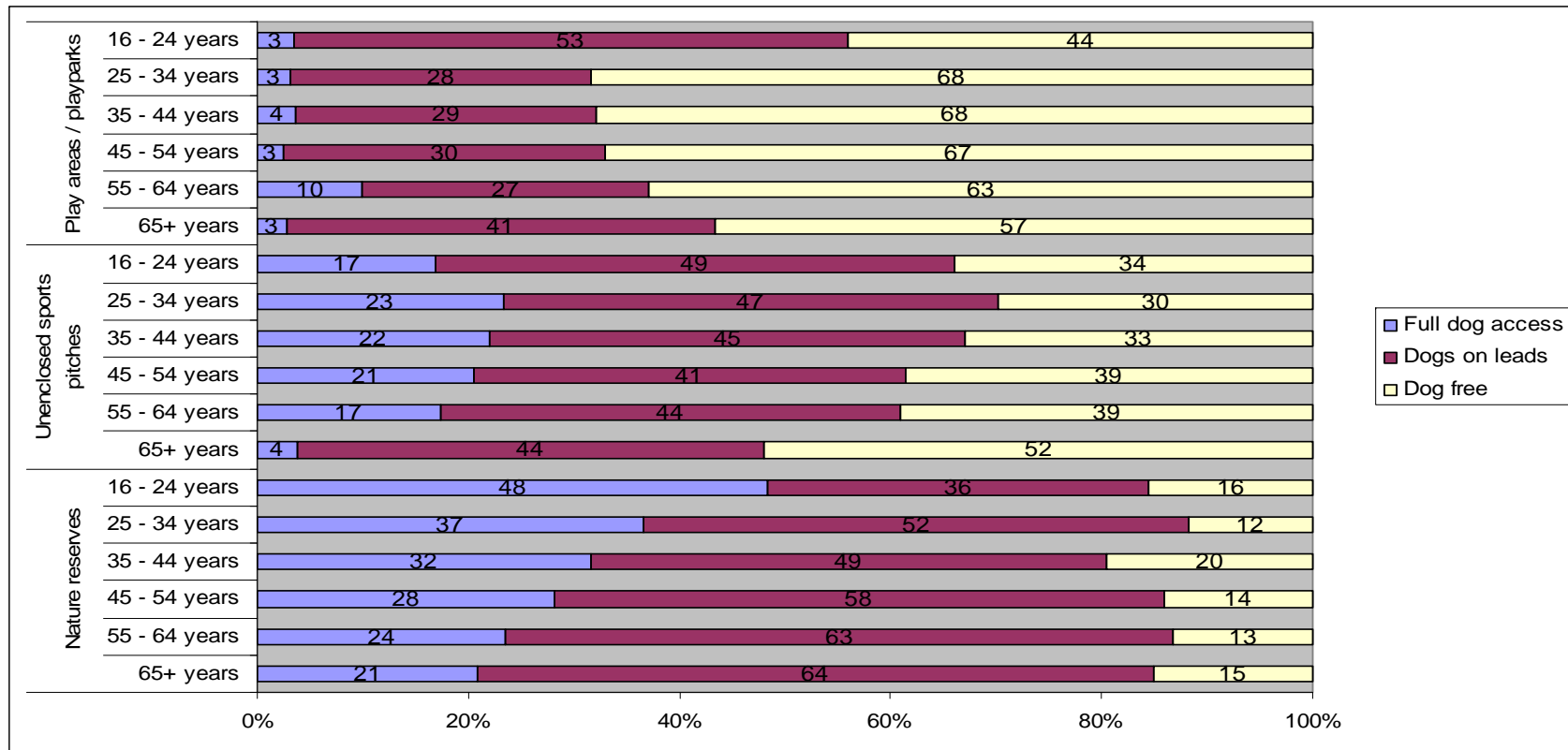
- Respondents were asked whether they thought different areas should allow full dog access, dogs on leads or be dog free.
- The majority of respondents (70%) thought that open areas should have full dog access.
- The majority of respondents (64% and 62% respectively) thought that enclosed sports facilities and playparks should be dog free.
- There was a mixed response about dog access in unenclosed sports pitches and nature reserves:
 - Unenclosed sports pitches: almost half (45%) thought dogs should be on leads, around two fifths (38%) thought they should be dog free.
 - Nature reserves: around half (55%) thought they should allow dogs on leads, around a third (31%) thought they should have full dog access.

Dog accessible areas continued



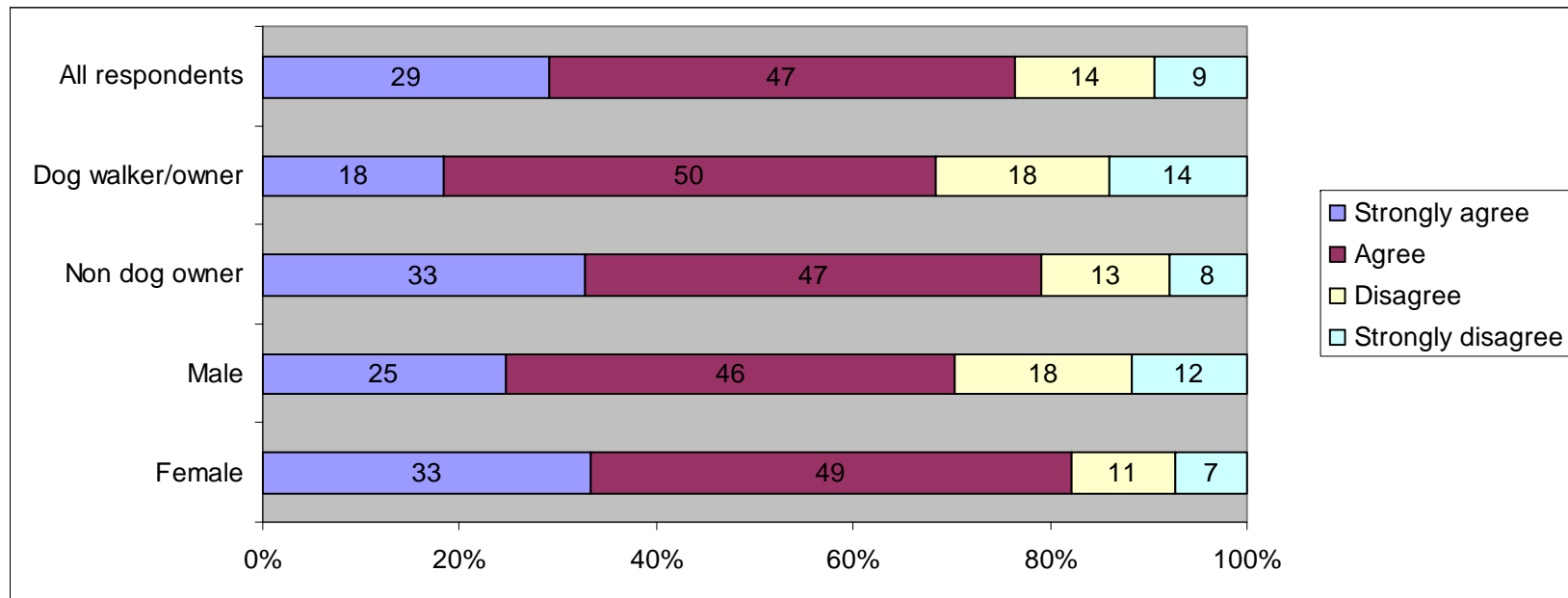
- With regards to dog accessible areas, there were some differences in opinion between dog owners/walkers and non dog owners:
 - Dog owners/walkers were more likely than non dog owners to support 'full dog access' in unenclosed sports pitches, nature reserves and open areas.
 - Those who don't own or walk dogs were more likely than dog owners/walkers to support 'dog free' in unenclosed sports pitches.
 - Non dog owners/walkers were more likely to support 'dogs on leads' in open areas.

Dog accessible areas continued



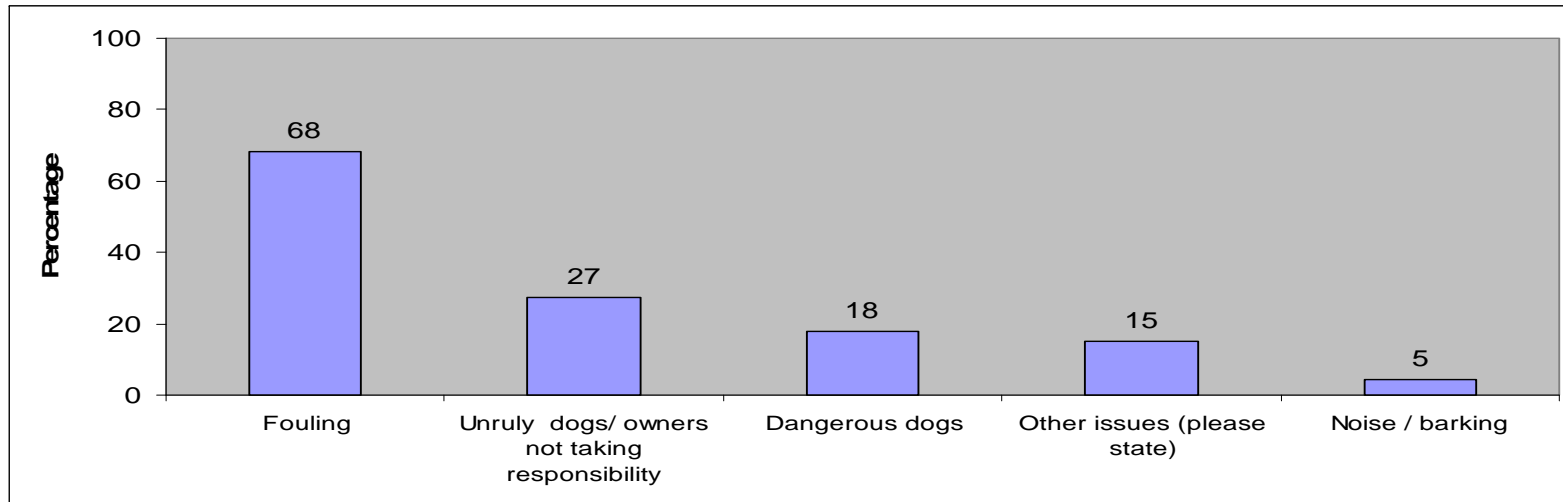
- There were also some differences by the age of respondents:
 - 16-24 year olds were more likely than any other age group to support 'dogs on leads' and less likely than any other age group to support 'dog free' in play areas/playparks.
 - Those aged 65+ years were less likely than any other age group to support 'full dog access' in unenclosed sports pitches.
 - Support for 'full dog access' in nature reserves declined with age.

Dog exercise areas / agility courses



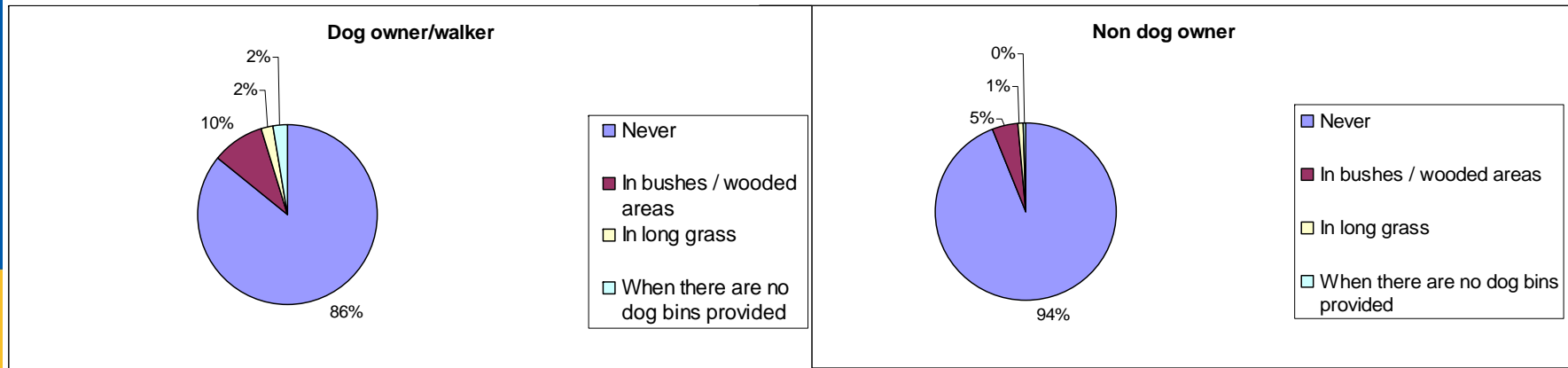
- All respondents (regardless of dog ownership) were asked if they thought parks should have designated dog exercise areas and/or agility courses.
- Around three quarters (76%) of respondents agreed ('strongly agree' or 'agree') that Bournemouth parks should have designated areas.
- Interestingly, those who don't own or walk a dog were significantly more likely to support this (80%) than those who do own/walk a dog (68%).
- Female respondents were also significantly more likely to support this suggestion (82%) than male respondents (71%).

Issues of concern



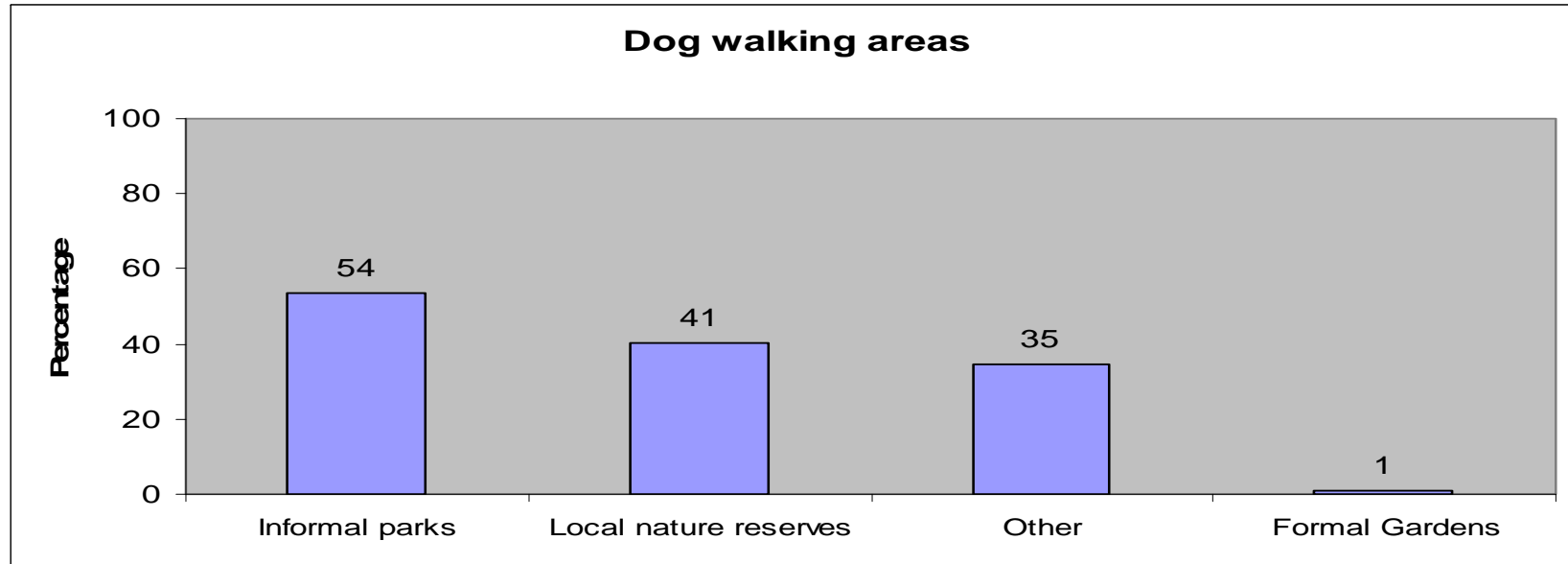
- When asked if there were any issues of concern around dogs and/or dog walking, two thirds (66%) of respondents raised at least one issue.
- Of those who had concerns, the main issue raised was dog fouling. Around two thirds (68%) mentioned this. Dog fouling was more of a concern for non dog owners than dog owners;
 - Around three quarters (73%) of non dog owners were concerned about it
 - Just over half (55%) of dog owners/walkers were concerned about it.
- Unruly dogs/owners not taking responsibility of their dogs was also a mentioned by over a quarter (27%) of respondents with concerns.
- Dangerous dogs was a concern for about a fifth (18%) of those with concerns.
- Other concerns raised were about the lack of dog bins / frequency of bins being emptied and dogs on beaches (both support and opposition).

Picking up after dogs



- Respondents were asked under what circumstances it is acceptable for dog owners not to pick up after their dogs.
- An overwhelming majority of respondents said this was never acceptable. However a small percentage thought it was acceptable in bushes/wooded areas and a tiny percentage thought it was okay in long grass or where no dog bins are provided. The percentages for these varied by dog ownership:
 - 95% of non dog owners compared to 86% of dog owners said it was never acceptable
 - Dog owners were twice as likely than non dog owners to think it was acceptable in bushes/wooded areas (10% and 5% respectively).

Dog walking behaviour

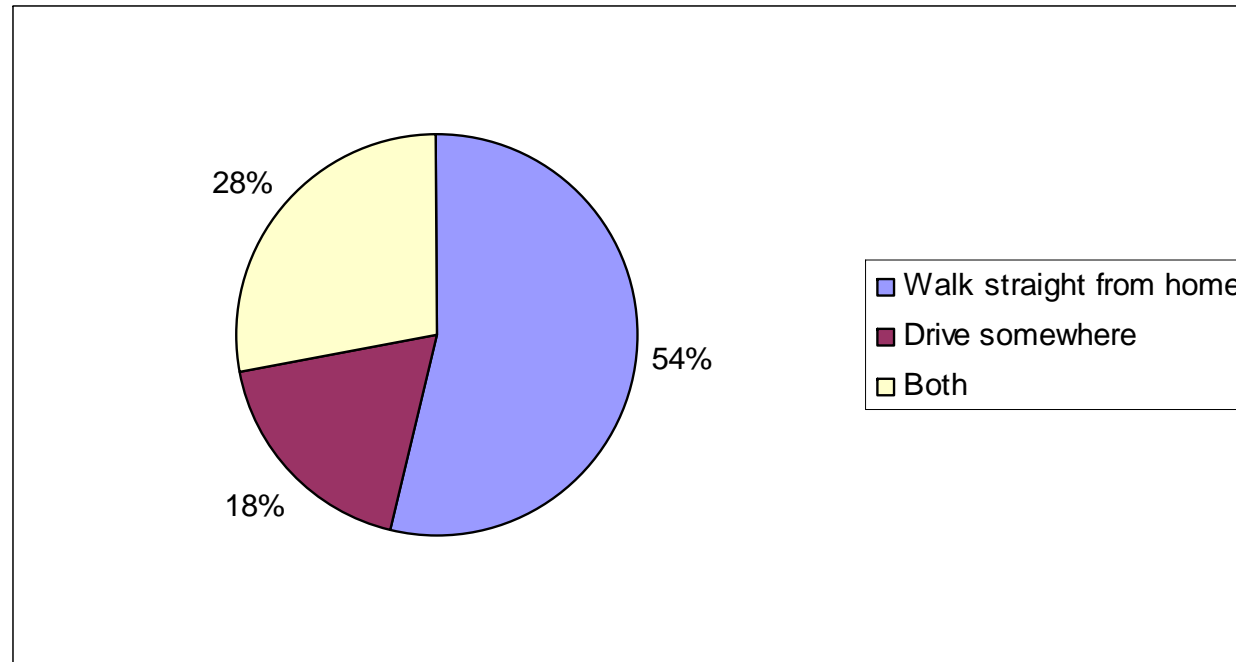


- Of the respondents who own and/or walk dogs, around three quarters (78%) walk their dog at least once a day.
- Three quarters (75%) walk only one dog. A further one fifth (21%) walk two dogs.
- Over half (54%) walk their dogs in informal parks and two fifths (41%) use local nature reserves. Only 1% of respondents used formal gardens.*
- Around a third (35%) of dog owners/walkers use other walking areas. These were mainly seafront/beaches, residential areas and areas outside Bournemouth (i.e. Poole, New Forest).

* Numbers add to more than 100% as respondents can choose more than one response.

See appendix for definitions of dog walking areas

Dog walking behaviour continued



- Over half (54%) walk their dogs straight from home, a fifth (18%) drive somewhere and the remaining 28% do both.
- Over half (52%) of those who drive somewhere, generally spend up to 10 minutes driving to the dog walking area.
- Almost all (98%) of dog owners/walkers said they always pick up after their dogs. 1% pick up most of the time and 1% never pick up.

Appendix: Dog walking areas

Dog walking areas were classified as informal parks, formal gardens and local nature reserves according to the details below:

Informal parks

Meyrick Park
Redhill Park
Seafield Gardens
Tuckton Gardens
Iford Playing Fields
Littledown Park
Kings Park
Queens Park
Fishermans Walk
Woodland Walk
Shelly Park
Strouden/Bradpole Park
Winton Recreation Ground
Alum Chine
Middle Chine
Durley Chine
Horseshoe Common
Slades Farm
Muscliff Park
Poole Lane/Duck Lane playing fields
Pelhams Park
Kinson Manor playing fields

Formal Gardens

Lower Gardens
Central Gardens
Boscombe Gardens
Alum Chine Tropical Gardens

Local Nature reserves

Stour Valley
Kinson Common
Turbery Common
Millhams Meade
Redhill Common
Hengistbury Head
Boscombe Chine
Iford Meadows
Pugs Hole
Boscombe/Southbourne Overcliff