



PALMERSTON NORTH CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA

MINUTES ATTACHMENTS STRATEGY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

9:00 AM, WEDNESDAY 20 AUGUST 2025

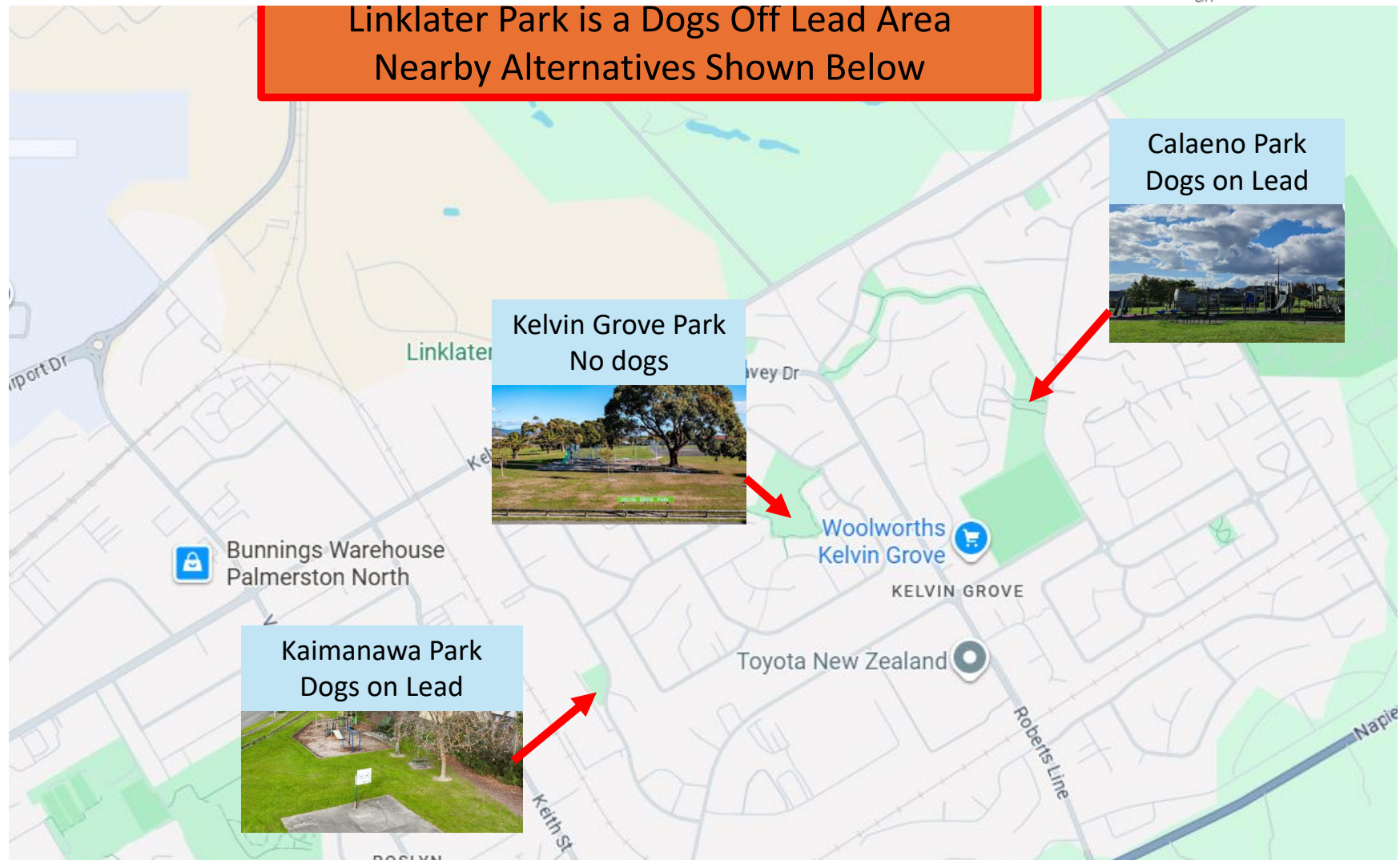
COUNCIL CHAMBER, FIRST FLOOR
CIVIC ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
32 THE SQUARE, PALMERSTON NORTH

STRATEGY & FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

20 August 2025

6 Hearing of Submissions - Proposed Linklater Reserve dogs on-leash area

1.	Submitter 40 - Geoff Anderson	4
2.	Submitter 416 - Ewen Cameron	5
3.	Submitter 450 - Sally Doherty	6
4.	Submitter 451 - Megan Wilson	15
5.	Submitter 883 - Kim Penny	21
6.	Submitter 925 - Val Burr	22
7.	Submitter 861 - Kelvin Grove Community Group	23



Revised thoughts on my Linklater Park submission.

Having thought about parks and recreation facilities in Palmerston North, I now think that **no change** ought to be made to the arrangements for dog walking at Linklater Park. In the same way as Ongley Park or other parks in Palmerston North are shared use facilities, being unavailable for the general public when they are used for sport, Linklater Park should be a shared facility for dog walkers and people who use the playground.

PNCC - Council doesn't need to spend any more money building fences to separate the off-leash dog walking area from the rest of the park. In the same way as the general public do not expect to walk through sporting events. Dog walkers make extensive use of Linklater Park during the week, when there are only other dog walkers there. If the general public want to visit the back of the park, they should expect that dogs will be off leash there, conversely dog walkers should expect to control their dog(s) when they are near the playground area.

I still think the aircraft is in a silly location – a long way from other things that children and others may use: it should be shifted.

Ewen Cameron

Petition against Linklater moving to Designated On Lead Areas.

In light of the significant weight given to the Kelvin Grove Residents' petition of 57 names within the Strategy and Analysis Report, I am also including below a petition of nearly three times as many signatories against designating on lead areas at Linklater Country Park.

This is to ensure that the collective voice of the wider community is clearly represented, and to be added alongside the paper petition that has already been submitted of 150 names.

In the petition, I also asked residents if they would support a fence immediately around the play equipment. Whilst I don't believe the data indicates that there is an issue with dogs being a nuisance at the swings, plane or tractor, I wanted to capture this data.

I will also be provided my speaker notes after my speaking slot tomorrow.

Petition to Keep Linklater Country Park 100% Off Leash

We, the undersigned, strongly oppose the Palmerston North City Council's proposal to make half of Linklater Reserve an on-leash area for dogs. Linklater Reserve is a unique and much-loved space in our city where people and dogs can enjoy the outdoors together. It offers safe, open areas for dogs to run, socialise, and exercise freely, as well as family-friendly facilities such as toilets, picnic areas, and playgrounds.

The majority of the community has made it clear that they do not support changes to the current dog control rules at Linklater. We believe that creating large on-leash zones would diminish the value of this reserve, reduce the wellbeing of both people and dogs, and set a damaging precedent for other parks in Palmerston North.

We call on the Council to respect the wishes of the community and retain Linklater Reserve as an off-leash space, with the exception of existing exclusions such as the children's playground area.

Summary of Support

Total signatories: 148

Dog owners: 136

Non-dog owners: 12

Linklater users: 147

Signatories

- Sharelle Abbott – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-22
- Geraldine Mason – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-22
- Warren Mason – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-22
- Genevieve Le Bas – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-22
- Tracy Fryer – Colyton – signed on 2025-07-22
- Gillian Evans – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-22
- Ian Neal – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-22
- Fran Rowley – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-22
- Caroline Smith – Feilding – signed on 2025-07-22
- Alvira Murison-Swartz – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-22
- Marie Flynn – Palmerston north – signed on 2025-07-22
- Sharon Dixon – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-22
- Paula Mabbitt – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-22
- Jeanette Mourie – Palmerstoj North – signed on 2025-07-22
- Conrad Boshoff – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-22
- Lisa McDonald – Summerhill – signed on 2025-07-22
- Sarah Carrington – Roslyn Palmerston north – signed on 2025-07-22
- Sheree Williamson – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-23
- Diane Crate – Feilding – signed on 2025-07-23
- Karen Griffiths – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-23
- Brittany Gillard – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-23
- Basil Lewis – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-23
- Hannah Phillips – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-23
- Daniel o'connell – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-23
- Neroli Harvey – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-23
- S Robertson – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-23
- David Hillary – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-23
- Elizabeth Harrison – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-23
- Erin Sullivan – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-23

- June Moulynnox – Palmerston nth – signed on 2025-07-23
- Abby Turnbull. Yes I oppose. – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-23
- Jess Greenwood – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-23
- Milly ODonoghue – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-23
- Leah Lulu – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-23
- Veronica Fairless – Ashhurst – signed on 2025-07-23
- Roger Kernohan – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-23
- Daniel Matthews – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-23
- Claire Hillary – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-23
- Angus Fechny – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-23
- Susan Bell – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-23
- Sam Hadley-Jones – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-23
- Sally Roberts – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-23
- Harriet Jackson – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-23
- Martin Steer – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-23
- Ray Barnett – Rongotea – signed on 2025-07-23
- Hamish Loveridge – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-23
- Melissa Jamieson – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-23
- Robbie Jamieson – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-23
- Christine Daykin – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-23
- Chantelle Richards – Ashhurst – signed on 2025-07-23
- Kate Wischnowsky – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-23
- Carole Vertongen – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-23
- Deborah Marshall – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-23
- Mitchell king – Palmerston north – signed on 2025-07-23
- Victoria Shaw – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-23
- Claire Herring – Palmerston north – signed on 2025-07-23
- Chethi Waite – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-23
- Ania Soszynski – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-23
- M Campbell – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-23
- Alistair Schaw – Palmerston nth – signed on 2025-07-23
- Gabriela Pakai – Palmerston north – signed on 2025-07-23
- Edna Davenport – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-23
- Rochelle wilson – Palmerston north – signed on 2025-07-23
- Tracey Fryer – Palmy – signed on 2025-07-23
- Maddi Crystal – Palmerston north – signed on 2025-07-23

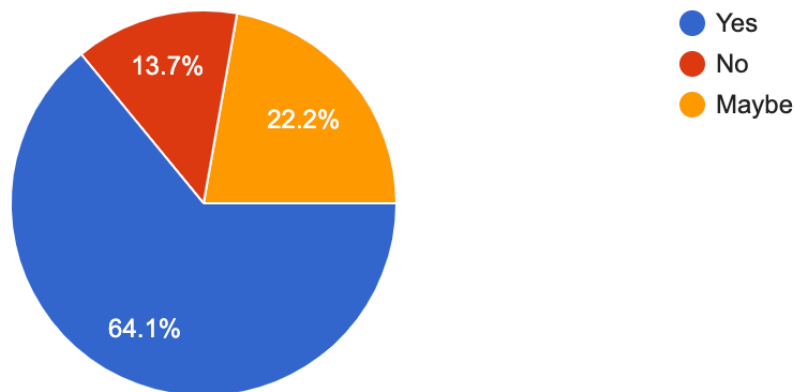
- Janice Mechen – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-23
- Elsja Marneweck – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-23
- Rebecca Stewart – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-23
- Gail Bartlett Harris – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-23
- Sally Doherty – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-23
- Rochelle Moore – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-23
- Terry Macpherson – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-23
- Helen Boyes – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-23
- Alex Ritchie – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-23
- Charlotte Orme – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-23
- Ngaire smith – Feilding – signed on 2025-07-24
- Helen presland – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-24
- Hollie Green – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-24
- Tara Gunn – PALMERSTON NORTH – signed on 2025-07-24
- Ruth Calton – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-24
- Teresa Maria-Martin – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-24
- Daisy Smith – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-24
- Shona Harris – Palmerston north – signed on 2025-07-24
- Sean OBrien – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-24
- Jana Thomas – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-24
- Mackenzie Brabant – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-24
- Renee Gleeson – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-24
- Andrew Williams – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-24
- Joanne Petersen – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-24
- Wayne Stokes – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-24
- Julie Koehler – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-24
- Carmen Honey – palmerston north – signed on 2025-07-25
- Demi Mimmack – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-25
- Mitchell Guile – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-25
- Judy Weller – Palmerston north – signed on 2025-07-25
- Myree Ahpene – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-25
- Kirsten Kirk – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-25
- Hannah Pratt – Palmerston north – signed on 2025-07-26
- Charly Floyd – Feilding – signed on 2025-07-26
- Rebecca Floyd – Feilding – signed on 2025-07-26
- Lyn Wilson – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-26

- Laura Ashcroft – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-26
- Demelsa Burnand – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-26
- RJLangley – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-27
- Annie Doherty – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-27
- Lori Kaspers – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-27
- Roberta Ireland – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-27
- Simon Thorpe – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-27
- Jana Thomas – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-28
- Aaron seymour east – palmerston north – signed on 2025-07-29
- Melanie Luoni – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-29
- Deborah Hewitt – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-29
- Vikki Searle – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-29
- Ryan Phillips-Wood – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-29
- Monique Couperus – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-29
- Julie Doherty – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-29
- Lara Voullaire – Feilding – signed on 2025-07-29
- Louise Nickalls – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-29
- Mike Shepherd – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-29
- Kate Shepherd – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-29
- Charlotte Grobler – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-30
- Richard Isaacs – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-30
- Rebecca Carroll – Halcombe – signed on 2025-07-30
- Pauline Williams – Palmerston north – signed on 2025-07-30
- Tim Love – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-30
- Janet Neale – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-30
- Louise Outtrim – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-30
- Isabelle Timmon – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-30
- Carol Shaw – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-30
- Maddy Peters-Algie – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-30
- Katherine Clifford – Palmerston north – signed on 2025-07-30
- David Clifford – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-30
- Steve Johnson – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-30
- Allanah Kilfoyle – Palmerston Nortn – signed on 2025-07-30
- Bartrum Baker – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-31
- Robin Baker – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-31
- Brenda Sullivan – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-31

- Barry Sullivan – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-31
- Oscar Turnbull – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-07-31
- AJ Jensen – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-08-01
- Zelia Leslie – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-08-01
- Michael Barnao – Havill Street Takaro Palmerston north – signed on 2025-08-02
- Sandy Roberston – palmerston north – signed on 2025-08-02
- Cheyenne Zoe – Palmerston North – signed on 2025-08-02
- Renee Schalkwijk – Palmerston north – signed on 2025-08-02
- Lynda Nansett – I don't. I live in rural location. Under Man District Council control. – signed on 2025-08-16
- Mark Nansett – I don't. I live in rural location. Under Man District Council control. – signed on 2025-08-16
- Margaret Judd – palmerston north – signed on 2025-08-19

Appendix A

Response to putting a fence **immediately** around the child's play equipment (please note, this does not include fencing over sectors of the park.



Linklater Reserve: The Only Fully Fenced Country Park

And why that matters – Sally Doherty

Key Message to Council

- **Keep Linklater as it is** and continue with education as always (Option 7)
- **Effective governance** must be rooted in evidence, not emotion.
- **Don't introduce limitations** for the those with illness, elderly & families who also need access to the facilities and can't do the 1 km round trip to access.
- **Represent the majority**, not a vocal minority
- **Protect a park that already works well** and is loved by many
- **Don't erode public confidence** in council process
- **Be better** at analysis and strategy

Consultation vs. Council Action

Despite the majority of responders PNCC still moved forward with drastic alteration recommendations and Ignoring data and majority opinion erodes public trust.

The Danger of Graphic Images and Anecdotal Evidence in Policy Decisions

Emotive photos and personal stories, while powerful, can distort perception and policymaking if not balanced with objective data. A photo of a dog bite, or an upsetting anecdote, carries intense emotional weight but it does not represent the broader reality.

These isolated incidents can create a false sense of crisis, especially when presented without context or supporting statistics. When decisions are driven by the most shocking or loudest voices rather than facts, the result is often reactive policies that fail to serve the greater good.

The Real Data on Safety

- Citywide dog attacks (2023–24): 141
- Linklater dog attacks: 3 (just 2% of total)
- Roaming Dogs in Palmerston North reported in 23/24 – 1,381
- Aggressive complaints (no physical harm includes non-contact behaviours like rushing/lunging)
 - Citywide: 162
 - At Linklater: 8 off lead dogs/1 on lead (3%)

Council

Engagement Survey Data

The estimate of daily dog visits is based directly on Council survey data, including:
Responses to

- “Do you take your dog to Linklater Reserve?” (83% said yes),
- Frequency of visits (“most days,” “a few times a week,” etc.),
- What do you do at the park?
- The % of respondents who are dog owners.

Calculations combining these survey responses show there are approximately 330–340 visits with a dog to Linklater Reserve each day. Over a year, this totals to about 122,000 annual dog visits. Based on Council records, there have been 3 reported dog attacks in a year at Linklater Reserve.

This means the percentage of dog **attacks per visit is 0.0025%, or approximately 1 in every 40,000 visits.**

In other words, over 99.9975% of all visits are safe and uneventful.

This clearly demonstrates that the overwhelming majority of dog visits to Linklater Reserve occur without incident, according to the Council’s own community data and records. If you halved the number of visits, this is still very low.

Flawed Problem Definition & Analysis

- Council accepted claims from 57 petitioners without validating data
- No conclusions of systemic safety issues at Linklater
- No balanced analysis of citywide options provided

Your analysis is flawed. Differentiating in your report between early engagement (survey one) and the second survey ignores the shift in context. The first asked a clear yes/no on on-leash areas; the second anchored the community to a significant change. Suggestions like alternative fence lines **are attempts by the community to reduce impact not endorsements.** Treating them as support is misleading.

The Bigger Picture and the Privilege of Choice

- 70+ km of walkways citywide
- 100+ parks & reserves (most dog-restricted)
- 11 parks/playgrounds in Kelvin Grove alone

Linklater is the only fenced off-lead dog park in the entire city and meets a unique need, not addressed by other parks where we have no other choice.

Why Linklater is Inclusive

- Serves all demographics: families, elderly, joggers, dog owners
- Features toilets, shelter, swimming holes, agility areas
- Designed to be shared, inclusive and safe
- Not every park can meet every need and that’s okay
- Linklater offers balance, not exclusion

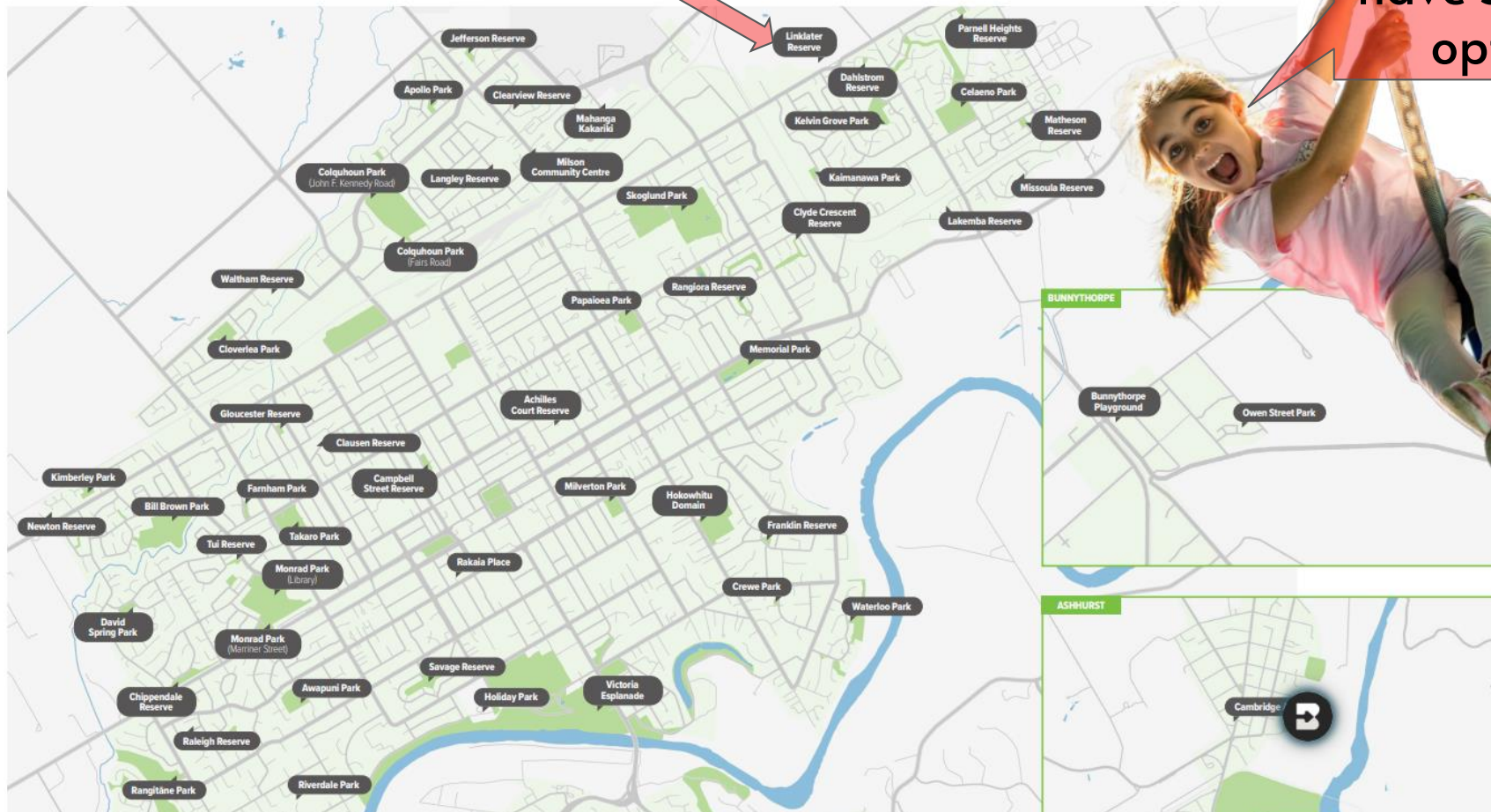
Proposed Changes Are Wasteful & Regressive

- **Costly:** \$62,000 for changes
- **Splitting the park in half:** Amenity-rich zone becomes on-lead, off-lead zone pushed to back paddocks
- Creates 1 km round-trip to reach off-lead area from main entrance
- Creates 1 km round-trip to reach the amenities from the off lead area.
- Disregards data, logic, and majority voice.
- **Introduces limitations** for the elderly, families, people with ill health who want to have access to the facilities and the off lead area.



PALMY PLAYGROUNDS

Wow! We do have SO many options!



CURRENT ON-LEAD PROPOSAL

Wow... this
seems a bit
excessive??



~~PALMY PLAYGROUNDS~~ OFF LEAD OPTIONS

Dog agility

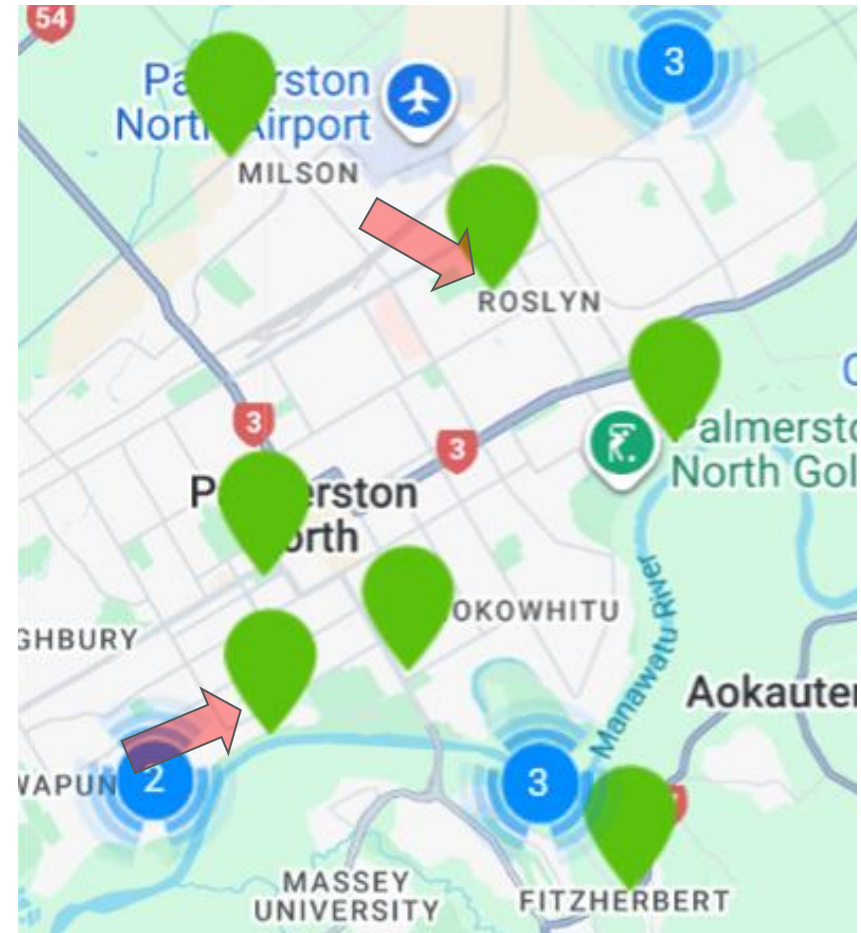
- 2 options
- you propose making one 'on-lead'

Fenced for safety

- Ahimate VERY small fenced area
- Linklater

Ahimate Dog Park

~~Linklater Reserve~~



A DIFFERENT OPTION

SIMPLE, SAFETY-CONSCIOUS,
and...

.. SUPER CHEAP!



Thank you for
your
consideration!



Kim Penny
Speaking to Submission on Proposed On-Leash walking area at Linklater Reserve
20th August 2025

Example for your reference: one way multiple needs are met at one reserve.

Dog walking at Point Chevalier Beach

Our tip

Always follow the rules on [where you can walk your dog](#) on our website even if the information on park signs does not match. Call us on 09 301 0101 if you need help.
Read more about the dog access rules in [Policy on dogs](#).

Other beach areas		Beach east of northern headland
Winter	Summer	All times
 Off-leash 4pm - 10am	 Off-leash 5am - 10am	 Off-leash All times
 On-leash 10am - 4pm	 On-leash 5pm - 5am	This covers the area east of the northern headland.
 Prohibited 10am - 5pm		

Winter rules apply from 2 March to 30 November.
Summer rules apply from 1 December to 1 March.
This covers the area from the marker post located at the northern-most access onto the beach (from Eric Armishaw Park) to the northern headland of Point Chevalier Beach.

[Point Chevalier Beach](#)

<https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/parks-recreation/Pages/park-details.aspx?Location=3514#dogwalking>

To PNCC
20 August 2025

Supplementary Submission: PNCC Linklater Reserve Off-leash Area

Hi,
I have been in touch with John Charlton, chairperson of Kelvin Grove Community Assn. Inc. (of which I am a long-time committee member), and he told me that Cr. Dennison, who chaired today's meeting regarding the Linklater Reserve, specifically invited supplementary submissions due to the shortened time available today for the oral submissions. The stipulation being for it to be received "today." Well, it's still "today."

So I wish to add to my oral submission delivered this morning.

After listening to a number of the submissions today, on top of months of Facebook remarks and so on, I would like to comment on something that has troubled me. It relates to health and safety at the park.

Numerous people have stated that they want to have access to the downhill 'wetland' so that their dogs can play in it. Possibly they don't comprehend that the water for it flows out of the suburb – so at a guess it's not a terrible healthy water supply.

However, my particular concern is for people falling into the stream – especially kids. I speak from experience, as I grazed my horse in that paddock around 1991. One day I had to cross the waterway to reach him and the bank gave way under my foot. Next thing I was underwater. Once I reached the surface, I found the mishap rather amusing. Fortunately it wasn't very deep, but it was very slippery, very muddy, and lacking in things to hold onto to get out of it. I drove home soaked that afternoon. In my opinion, this wetland is best left to the ducks and pukekos etc., and it certainly should be fenced off in some way to protect both kids and wildlife.

Finally, I'm inclined to think, following a conversation after the council meeting today, that KGCA 'might' be willing to contribute toward work at the Roberts Line end of the park, if its split, provided all those kennel clubs and dog walkers etc. did the same.

Regards,
Val Burr,
Kelvin Grove.

Linklater Reserve
On-leash Dog Exercise Area
Submission

20 August 2025

Kelvin Grove Community Association

Kelvin Grove Community Association Submission – Public Safety at Linklater Reserve

Consultation

- 80% of respondents were dog owners
- Less than 10% of residents own dogs
- The rights of the majority outweigh the rights of the small number of dog owners.

KGCA Submission – Public Safety at Linklater Reserve

Objections

- **Few off-leash areas?** There are 26 off-leash areas
- **Go elsewhere!** Parks are for everyone and safety is the highest priority
- **Linklater only fenced area.** Why do you need a fence if your dog is under control?
- **No problem?** Dogs are inherently dangerous and attacks at Linklater are above average for parks.

KGCA Submission – Public Safety at Linklater Reserve

Relevant Legislation

- Local Government Act prioritises public safety.
- Dog Control Act prioritises public safety, minimal danger, distress and nuisance.
- Health and Safety Act requires council to protect public and eliminate hazards from a workplace if reasonably practicable to do so.

KGCA Submission – Public Safety at Linklater Reserve

History

- **2011** Undeveloped reserve made 100% off-leash without community consultation.
- **2015–2022** Reserve developed and play equipment added without reducing off-leash area.
- **2024** KGCA proposed making southern half of Linklater Reserve on-leash .

Linklater Park 30 m dog prohibited zones



Linklater Park 10 m dog prohibited zones



KGCA Submission – Public Safety at Linklater Reserve

- **Option 5** 600 m by ~180 m to 270 m - about 15 rugby fields!
- Total circuit is further than here to Cook St and back!



KGCA Submission – Public Safety at Linklater Reserve

- Give park back to all residents
- Keep park users safe
- Adopt Option 5.
- Thank you.

14 August 2025

Submission: Palmerston North City Council Linklater Reserve Off-leash Area

This submission is in addition to our submission dated 21 July 2025, due to the oral submission time being halved from ten to five minutes.

Executive Summary

This submission argues that PNCC has an overriding responsibility under the Dog Control Act to minimise the inherent danger in allowing dogs to have uncontrolled access to public places and to enable the public to use all public amenities without fear of attack or intimidation by dogs.

This obligation is not reduced by the results of public consultation in favour of prioritising the recreational needs of dogs and their owners.

Council's own statistics prove this obligation is not being met, and the risk of dog attack is disproportionately high at Linklater Reserve, and ACC statistics show Council statistics are grossly underreporting the problem. Furthermore, the minimisation policies recommended by Council officers have been ineffective in the past and are currently not being implemented due to under-resourcing or impracticality.

Next, we show that under the Health and Safety Act the Council has an obligation to take all practical measures to minimise the risk of injury to employees, contractors and visitors in areas under its control, including Linklater Reserve.

Finally, we highlight the risk all dogs pose to the general public as revealed by the sad death of Timothy Rolleston-Bryan in Katikati earlier this year – killed by three off-leash dogs.

KGCA support the PNCC proposal reducing the off-leash area to half the Reserve as the fairest and most practical way of meeting its legal obligations under these two Acts and urges councillors to vote in favour of the proposal to protect the safety of the public.

Requirements of the Dog Control Act

1. Section 10 (4) of the Dog Control Act states the Territorial Authority must have regard to:
 - a. The need to minimise danger, distress, and nuisance to the community generally; and
 - b. The need to avoid the inherent danger in allowing dogs to have uncontrolled access to public places that are frequented by children, whether or not the children are accompanied by adults; and
 - c. The importance of enabling, to the extent that is practicable, the public (including families) to use the streets and amenities without fear of attack or intimidation by dogs; and
 - d. The exercise and recreational needs of the dogs and their owners.
2. We note the order in which these considerations are prioritised – the first three emphasising the needs of the general public, children and families and the last one considering the needs of dogs and their owners.
3. The Act does not refer to "some public places"; it applies to all public places. Therefore, the availability of other parks and reserves that have on-leash areas does not remove the

- obligation the Council has to ensure the public can use Linklater Reserve without fear of attack and intimidation.
4. The obligations under the Act are absolute – no amount of consultation or submissions by members of the public reduces the requirement to provide for safe enjoyment of amenities.
 5. While, under Section 10A of the Act, the Council is obligated to report annually on the implementation of its Dog Control Policy, the Act does not require the level of detail necessary to establish if policies at individual parks are fulfilling the requirements of Section 10.
 6. We are advised in LGOIMA SRC0218926 that in the 2023-2024 period for Linklater Reserve Council has received 23 complaints in total, 9 for aggressive dogs (no injury), 11 uncontrolled dogs (roaming, found, off leash), and 3 dog attacks causing injury.
 7. The same response advised that Council had received 103 complaints in total for poorly controlled dogs in ALL Palmerston North Parks.
 8. Therefore 22% of all complaints originate from dog behaviour at one of the 26 dog exercise areas in the city.
 9. Linklater Reserve has 25.3 of the 195.2 hectares for dog exercise in the city – 13%
 10. It is obvious the risk to the public at Linklater Reserve is disproportionately high, clearly indicating the current policies are not fulfilling the requirements of the Act.
 11. The PNCC Dog Control Report for 2023/2024 states there were 141 dog attacks during the year, with 52 being attacks on persons – an increase of 22% on the previous year, implying there were around 42 the previous year.
 12. ACC reported 255 new dog bite claims (excluding acute treatment at a public hospital) for the 2022 calendar year, six times as many as PNCC reported, which strongly indicates that Palmerston North Animal Control is seriously under-stating the number of attacks and the scale of the problem of poorly controlled dogs.
 13. This reinforces our anecdotal evidence from social media that many people who are injured by dogs do not report them to PNCC, as they are too busy seeking medical attention for themselves or their pets.

Effectiveness of Current Animal Management Strategies

It is clear the requirements of Section 10 of the Dog Control Act are not currently being met at Linklater Reserve. PNCC has three possible strategies to manage this. They are, in decreasing order of merit, eliminate, substitute or minimise the problem.

Currently the strategy is to minimise the problem through education of dog owners, but this is clearly not working. We understand that there is no specific budget allocated for dog-owner education and note that the report states:

“An incident during the year resulted in the Kennel Supervisor and Education being vacant for an extended period, and the duties were covered in part by the afterhours contractor providing additional services. The job position is currently under review before advertising a second time.”

So not only is the strategy unsuccessful, but it is also not currently being implemented.

The recent petition from the residents of Savage Crescent requesting a review of Animal Management is further indication of the poor performance of this team, possibly through under-resourcing as vacant positions are not being filled and contractors are used outside business hours. The Savage Crescent neighbourhood was terrorised by a pair of Mastiff dogs for eighteen

months and it took the intervention of a government minister to have the situation rectified. Palmerston North clearly has a serious dog-control problem.

The other minimisation strategy adopted by the Council at Linklater Reserve is the regulation prohibiting dogs within 35m of play equipment, although it is unclear from the signage the extent of these areas. This measure is totally meaningless, completely ineffective and universally ignored. Measuring the distance on Google Maps indicates that it is impossible to take a dog from the Kelvin Grove Rd carpark to the dog-agility area without breaching this prohibition. Every dog owner using that car park is therefore breaking the rule – which explains why the distance is being reduced to 10m in the current proposal. We would support this reduction provided that the entire area is on-leash so dogs are under control.

We also note that the proposal includes a fence between the off-leash and on-leash areas (a measure we support) and that some dog owners submitted they prefer Linklater Reserve to other off-leash areas because it is fully fenced. This begs the question why is a fence required when dog-owners are, under Section 5 of the Act, required to have full control of their dogs?

The statistics show that not all owners fulfil this legal obligation and, as the Act states, there is an inherent danger in allowing dogs to have uncontrolled access to public places that are frequented by children. Other measures are required.

Elimination of Risk

As claimed above, the best strategy at Linklater Reserve to fulfil the requirements of Section 10 is elimination of the threat. As per the Council proposal, this can be achieved by making half the park on-leash, thereby achieving the requirements of subsections (a) to (c), and fencing the other half of the park as an off-leash area, thereby meeting the requirements of subsection (d).

The proposed off-leash area covers about 45% of the total reserve area. This is over 100,000 square metres, the same area as around sixteen rugby fields. Given that there are about 7,872 dog owners in a city of over 92,000 people, less than 10% of the population is getting the benefit of half the total resource. This is more than fair.

Health and Safety at Work Act

There is another legislative issue the Council must consider. It is illustrated by the conviction of Gore District Council for failing to ensure, so far as was reasonably practicable, a workplace was without risks to the health and safety of any person including Lachlan Paul Graham Jones – a three-year-old child who drowned late one evening in the Gore Oxidation Ponds.

Under Section 20 of the Health and Safety at Work Act, a workplace “includes any place where a worker goes, or is likely to be, while at work”. As PNCC staff maintain Linklater Reserve it is undoubtedly a workplace. It is clear from the conviction that the obligations of the Council extend to the general public and apply even when work is not taking place. Under the Act the Council must take all practical measures to minimise the risk of injury in areas under its control. Fencing off the off-leash area is a practical measure to protect council employees, contractors working at the Reserve and the public from attacks by poorly controlled dogs.

We submit that, under this legislation, the Council has a legal obligation to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable that any person can visit Linklater Reserve without risk to their health and safety. Approving the reasonably practical proposal to divide the park would go a long way to achieving this.



Conclusion

Finally, consider Timothy Rolleston-Bryan, the four-year-old Katikati boy killed in March of this year by three off-leash dogs not classified as menacing under the Dog Control Act. Experts quoted in the media at the time emphasised that ALL dogs pose a risk as any dog can attack a person without warning.

According to reports at the time, around 28,000 dog-related injuries were recorded in New Zealand last year, with nearly 3000 of those involving children under 15 years old. The experts claimed that even these numbers seriously under-reported the number of incidents.

It is only a matter of time before another child is killed by dogs. Do we want it to be in Palmerston North?

KGCA supports the PNCC proposal reducing the off-leash area to half the Reserve as the fairest and most practical way of meeting its legal obligations under these two Acts to protect the public, especially children, from off-leash dogs.

We urge all councillors to protect the safety of the public, especially vulnerable children, by voting in favour of the proposal to reduce the off-leash area at Linklater Reserve to the northern half of the reserve.

Thank you for considering our submission.

On behalf of Kelvin Grove Community Association

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Chatter'.

Chair.



20 August 2025

Supplementary Submission: PNCC Linklater Reserve Off-leash Area

The Chair of the Committee, Councillor Dennison, specifically invited supplementary submissions due to the truncated time allowed for oral submissions.

This submission supplements our oral submission.

Comment on the Public Consultation

1. KGCA accepts the vast majority of both written and oral submissions were in favour of retaining the bulk the Linklater Reserve as an off-leash area.
2. A proportion of submitters stated that, as a dog park, Linklater Reserve was a unique regional asset due to its size, facilities and location. We concede this is a fair point even though it was not the original intent when Linklater Reserve was created.
3. A proportion of submitters also conceded that not all dogs were properly controlled and supported that the playground areas should be on-leash, with the boundary at the tree line north of the bike track.
4. Other submitters praised the all-weather and disabled access currently available from the Kelvin Grove Rd carpark.
5. KGCA noted that under the current 30 metre prohibition rule most of the lower area is effectively on-leash.

Proposed Compromise Solution

A solution that would satisfy the vast majority of submissions is:

1. Accept that Linklater Reserve as a dog park is now a unique regional asset and enhance access to it from Roberts Line to reduce dog traffic in the playground area.
2. Seal the Roberts Line carpark, provide disabled parking and install new toilets by this carpark.
3. Provide some concrete all-weather paths from this carpark to the northern portion of the reserve to meet the needs of partially disabled dog owners.
4. Enlarge the existing wetland areas in the northern area of the reserve for canine recreation to reduce the need for dogs to enter the playground area.
5. Designate as on-leash all the area south of the treeline including the wetland area, thereby providing a safe area for children and families as required under the Dog Control Act.
6. Move the aeroplane into the on-leash area east of the bike track so eliminating the risk to children playing on it and also reducing the risk of vandalism to the plane.

This solution will ensure the safety of the public, especially vulnerable children, and accommodate the wishes of the majority of submitters as far as is practicable.

Thank you, on behalf of Kelvin Grove Community Association

Chair.