

# Leigh-on-Sea 'Dog Park' proposal

## What is it

A dog park is an area of land that provides fenced in sections where dog owners can confidently let their dogs off the lead without fear of them running off or having an 'unfriendly' encounter with other dogs. Owners pay the dog park owner for a guaranteed period for their own use (normally 45-50 mins), leaving a changeover period before the next hirer has access. Gates for the dog park would be controlled remotely with each hirer being issued with a PIN code that allowed access only for their booked time slot.



There was a huge influx of dog ownership during COVID lockdowns and unfortunately a lot of these dogs have grown up in isolation which makes them both nervous and unpredictable. We have also, unfortunately, seen over the last couple of years several dog attacks on other dogs. These circumstances have led to the fact that a lot of dog owners now prefer to walk their dogs on the lead only, which is not ideal for the dog's health in a lot of cases.

Dog parks have been growing in popularity around the world, including the UK, but only 1 or 2 exist within the Southend borough due to the shortage of open land, and the high value placed on this land.

## First steps...

I am hoping to get support from Leigh Town Council to enable an initial investigation phase to commence. This being;

- 1) Consultation with Southend City Council as to the availability of land for lease to Leigh Town Council and likelihood of planning support for a dog park on that land.
- 2) Some level of early engagement with residents as to whether they would want this in Leigh. Could be via a newspaper article, website news article, or a combination of these. (I would expect further resident interactions if and when we decided to go ahead).
- 3) Potential engagement with an online community that offers advice on these projects (<https://britishdogfields.com/>)

Should the Full Council give its approval for these initial steps then there would be a commitment to report back within 2 months maximum on the findings and proposed way forward. If we went ahead there would have to be detailed discussions on development costs and how it would actually operate.

I would obviously welcome any other councillors getting involved to form a small working group, but equally happy to take these early tasks forward alone....with the assistance of the Town Clerk if agreed.

Thanks

**Councillor Paul Barber**