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7 December 2011

Ms Alison Wilson
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Dear Ms Wilson

The Petition PE1396 (Breeding & Abandonment of Staffordshire Bull Terriers)

Thank you for your letter of 17 November 2011 seeking information in relation to the work being undertaken by Angus Council in taking forward the issues raised in this particular Petition, as lodged by Mr Ian Robb.

Angus Council has undertaken to use all proportionate measures at its disposal to tackle the issue of breeding and abandonment of Staffordshire Bull Terriers. The Council has recognised that the current legislative routes are difficult to enforce in any meaningful manner and the burden of proof, married to the reduced availability of public sector finance, severely limits the ability to enforce the current legislation. The Council has explored with Mr Robb the idea of assisted neutering schemes and believe there is some merit for Scottish Ministers to identify a small pot of resources that could be bid for to cover the costs of neutering, where certain conditions apply. This Council would be willing to pilot such a scheme in association with the National Dog Warden Association and Mr Robb and any other interested parties.

In addition to this proposal, the Council has reinforced its pets policy within the tenants' newsletter and provided signposting advice to tenants with dogs through the same newsletter. In addition, Housing Visitors and Inspectors along with Community Wardens have been advised to keep an eye out for any signs of illegal breeding and to report these to housing management staff and/or the Dog Warden and to ensure that the Council's policy on keeping pets in Council houses is enforced.

In general, the demise of the dog licence scheme, coupled with the imprecise nature of the current legislation in this area, means that awareness and education of responsible dog ownership are the most practicable solutions that any Council has to offer at present. We would welcome the development of an assisted neutering scheme but this itself would be voluntary and whilst all reasonable steps would be taken to promote the scheme, it is recognised that it may be taken up only by responsible dog owners in the main.

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I trust this is helpful and will be made available for the Committee's deliberations.

Yours sincerely

Richard Stiff
Chief Executive