

Alison Wilson
Public Petitions Committee
Scottish Parliament
T3.40
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

29 February 2012

Dear Ms Wilson,

CONSIDERATION OF PETITION PE1396

Thank you for your letter dated 3rd February asking for our further consideration of petition PE1396 on the over breeding and abandonment of Staffordshire bull terriers, submitted by Ian Robb. You asked for our views on the specific written questions to the Scottish Government.

The specific written question is, in fact a request by the Public Petitions Committee that the Scottish Government take the lead in establishing a working group, with relevant stakeholders, to discuss examples of best practice in tackling these issues and to identify how local authorities and other professional and voluntary organisations can work together to improve the current situation. The Committee directed us to the examples provided by Angus and Clackmannanshire Council as part of the written submissions to the Committee in respect of the petition. They asked that we confirm that we will take this work forward, and provide a draft remit and membership for the group along with a timetable for taking the work forward.

In previous correspondence (9th December 2011) I noted our willingness to be involved in a number of strands of discussion put forwards, including a working party to facilitate a greater degree of liaison and cooperation between police, Councils, Council Housing Departments, the fiscal service social workers, Dog wardens and animal rescue charities. However, I also suggested that this would be more appropriate for Local Authorities to take forwards.

Our offer of involvement stands; we would be more than happy to provide advice and to field representatives from the Animal Welfare and/or Criminal Justice Teams for meetings as appropriate, resource permitting. However, we remain of the opinion that the resolution of the Staffordshire bull terrier issue can best be achieved by robust enforcement of existing legislation and by interested parties working together at a local level to adopt specific policies appropriate to the situation in that area. We believe that COSLA would be a more appropriate body to lead a working group at a national level to facilitate this. As the representative body for Scottish Local Authorities they will have a better appreciation of the challenges of enforcing the existing legislation as only one part of the much wider remit of local authorities and would be a more appropriate organisation to lead the development of Local Authority policy on Staffordshire bull terriers.

I hope that this information is helpful to the Committee in their further consideration of the petition on Staffordshire bull terriers. Should the Committee require further information please feel to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Dr Beverley Williams
Animal Welfare Team Leader