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Animal Offenders Register:

I am aware of recent calls for the introduction of such a register, shared between the police, animal welfare organisations, and pet breeders.

The Animal Welfare Investigation Project has suggested that this could be used to track individuals who have been convicted of animal welfare offences. The Government has responded to similar proposals to state that a log of prosecutions is kept on the Police National Computer, and that a publicly accessible database could facilitate vigilantism.

As you will know, disqualification orders can be placed on offenders convicted of offences under the Animal Welfare Act 2006. Under disqualification orders, the offender is prevented from owning or keeping animals, as well as participating in the keeping of animals. These offences include causing unnecessary suffering, mutilation such as dog ear cropping, fighting, and tail docking.

Sadly, it is also the case that mutilation can go hand in hand with other forms of animal abuse, such as fighting. I want to see proper action on issues such as dog ear cropping, and laws that are not only tighter but are also properly enforced.

I believe it is vitally important to show that animal abuse will not be tolerated in this country. All animals deserve protection. I have long supported increased sentencing for animal cruelty, and I welcomed the passing of the Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Act 2021. The Act increases the maximum penalties for some animal cruelty offences. However, I am concerned by the Act's lack of provisions for wild animals, and its creation of a two-tier system. All animals feel pain and suffer, and those harming them should feel the full force of the law.

Strengthening our animal welfare laws is a priority. People want to see us go further on animal welfare than we have done. They want to see Britain be a beacon nation, putting the health of our animals first and foremost.

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