



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Finlay Carson MSP
Convener
Rural Affairs and Islands Committee
c/o Clerk to the Committee

Mark Ruskell MSP

5 February 2026

Dear Finlay

Re: Stage 1 Report on the Greyhound Racing (Offences) (Scotland) Bill

I thank the Committee for its consideration of the general principles of the Greyhound Racing (Offences) (Scotland) Bill, and for its report on the Bill at stage 1. I am writing in response to a request for information which was set out in the report as follows:

78. The Committee requests the member in charge provide an update to the Committee, ahead of stage 2, on how discussions are developing with COSLA and the Scottish SPCA regarding extending responsibility for enforcement.

As the report notes, the Bill provides Police Scotland with enforcement powers in relation to the offences set out in the Bill. The Scottish Government previously suggested that extending enforcement powers to SSPCA and local authority inspectors should be explored.

Having had useful discussions with the SSPCA, COSLA and the Scottish Government on this matter, it seems that there is no appetite to extend enforcement powers at this point, and it has therefore been agreed that it would not be appropriate to pursue the extension of enforcement powers to SSPCA and local authority inspectors.

It is worth noting that, while the enforcement powers as set out in the Bill will only extend to Police Scotland, SSPCA and local authority inspectors will still have inspection powers in relation to animal welfare under the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006 Act. These could be used, for example, should there be cases involving unnecessary suffering or concerns as to the welfare of a greyhound.

I hope this provides a helpful update to the Committee.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Ruskell".

Mark Ruskell MSP