

ELLIOT COLBURN MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon. Lord Goldsmith
Minister of State
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London
SW1P 3JR

25 January 2021

Our Ref: EC9505

Dear Lord Goldsmith,

RE: Compulsory Microchipping

I am getting in touch regarding the consultation on cat and dog microchipping and scanning, launched on 23 December 2020.

The consultation includes proposals to make microchipping compulsory for owned cats, which I wholeheartedly agree with and I know follows up on one of our manifesto commitments on animal welfare. I met with Cats Protection in July and October of last year to discuss this, and it is an issue that many of my constituents care very deeply about.

Cats roam and a microchip increases the chances of a lost or injured cat being safely reunited with their owner. Unlike collars, microchips don't come off, or put cats at risk of collar-related injuries. Furthermore, if a cat is sadly involved in a road traffic accident and taken to a vet for treatment, an up to date microchip would allow the vet to get consent for any necessary treatment from the owner.

You will, I am sure, be aware of the horrific spate of cat killings we have had across much of south London, which has distressingly involved cats being beheaded by a sadistic individual or individuals. I raised the matter in Parliament during Second Reading of the *Animal Welfare (Sentencing Bill)* – relevant section here: <https://bit.ly/3pig9RV> – and am currently working closely with the South London Animal Investigation Network (SLAIN), the RSPCA, Cats Protection, and others to encourage the Police to formally reopen the investigation into these depraved killings. Compulsory microchipping would greatly assist in those animals cruelly and inhumanely attacked in this way being repatriated with their owners sooner.

Cats Protection's *Cats and Their Stats* (CATS) report highlights that a staggering 2.6 million owned cats across the UK remain unchipped. Compulsory microchipping of pet cats will improve the welfare for millions of cats and would be welcomed by cat owners nationwide.

It has also been compulsory to microchip dogs in the UK since 2016. Making it compulsory for cats would bring parity to these two popular companion animals.

I congratulate you on this and all the other great initiatives you are bringing forward to benefit companion and other animals. Given the public and political support for compulsory microchipping of cats I hope that this can be introduced without delay through regulations this year.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elliot Colburn', written over a white background.

Elliot Colburn

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