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The Scottish Conservatives are calling on the SNP government to hurry up and start the process of implementing Finn's Law, which would create a new offence of harming or killing a service animal.

Less than a fortnight ago three police horses were allegedly attacked by a football fan on his way to the Scottish Cup clash between Celtic and Airdrie.

Earlier this month, Mairi Gougeon, SNP minister for rural affairs and natural environment spoke of her ambition to publish the consultation before the end of this month. It is now the last day of January and this has not yet happened.

The Scottish Conservatives have been campaigning with PC Dave Wardell and Police Dog Finn to change the law in order to introduce a criminal offence for those who harm trained animals like dogs and horses working with the police, fire service, military or other public services. It could also cover assistance animals like guide dogs.

It is still not a specific crime to injure or kill a service animal in Scotland. Offenders who harm service animals such as dogs or horses can only be charged under a patchwork of laws unfit for this purpose.

The SNP has already committed to introducing Finn's Law in Scotland by the end of this Parliament.

The Scottish Conservatives are therefore urging the Scottish Government to stop dithering and publish the consultation of this law as soon as possible.

Liam Kerr MSP, Scottish Conservative shadow justice secretary said:

"Scotland is already behind the rest of the UK in this important area.

"In Scotland, hundreds of service animals work with Police Scotland to keep us safe.

"Just two weeks ago three police horses were allegedly attacked, by a thug, while they were protecting others.

"Without the tireless efforts of PC Dave Wardell and PD Finn, we wouldn't

have a commitment from the SNP to give service animals the legal protection they deserve.

“The Scottish Conservatives will continue to keep the pressure on the SNP government to implement Finn’s Law.

“The SNP government must stop dithering and publish the consultation immediately.”