

[News story: Third party puppy sales: Michael Gove launches call for evidence on ban](#)

A ban on third party puppy sales is to be explored by the government as part of a package of reforms to drive up animal welfare standards, the Environment Secretary Michael Gove has announced today.

A [call for evidence](#) is launched today seeking views on a possible ban on third party sales, which would mean anyone looking to buy or adopt a dog will either deal directly with the breeder or with one of the nation's many animal rehoming centres.

A [raft of measures to crack down on unscrupulous puppy breeders](#) set out by the Prime Minister in December have also been laid in Parliament today.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

We need to do everything we can to make sure the nation's much loved pets get the right start in life. From banning the sale of underage puppies to tackling the breeding of dogs with severe genetic disorders, we are cracking down on sellers who have a total disregard for their dogs' welfare.

This is a further step to raise the bar on animal welfare standards. We are also introducing mandatory CCTV in all slaughterhouses and increasing maximum prison sentences tenfold for animal abusers.

The legislation being put before parliament today will come into force later this year, including:

- Banning licensed sellers from dealing in puppies and kittens under the age of eight weeks;
- Ensuring that licensed dog breeders show puppies alongside their mother before a sale is made;
- Tackling the sale of weak underage puppies and the breeding of unhealthy dogs and dogs with severe genetic disorders;
- Introducing compulsory licensing for anyone in the business of breeding and selling dogs;

- Requiring puppy sales to be completed in the presence of the new owner, preventing online sales where prospective buyers have not seen the animal first;
- Insisting licensed dog breeders can only sell puppies they have bred themselves.

These plans have been widely welcomed by charities.

RSPCA deputy chief executive Chris Wainwright said:

We are delighted that Defra is considering a ban on third party sales of puppies. We believe that cracking down on unscrupulous traders, who put profit ahead of animal welfare, will provide much-needed protection for prospective pet owners and puppies.

We have always said that an end to third party sales alone would not be enough to end the puppy trade crisis and we are pleased that this is being looked at alongside enhanced licensing conditions for breeders which will come into force later this year.

Together, we hope these moves will offer better protection to puppies and their parents and also reduce the number of families duped by rogue traders in this illegal multi-million-pound trade.

Mayhew rehoming centre's CEO Caroline Yates said:

We are really pleased today to hear that there will be a call for evidence on banning third party sales of animals. It is a real issue that animal welfare organisations are very concerned about. Getting a dog or cat is not a commercial business and these big puppy farms have no regard for their health or welfare.

Owners are being duped into buying animals from these places and the resulting sickness and poor treatment means there is also an additional burden on animal welfare charities that are mopping up the problem.

Caroline Kisko, Kennel Club Secretary, said:

The Kennel Club welcomes Defra's announcement as a crucial step forward to tackle the cruel puppy farming industry. The Kennel Club, whose own regulations explicitly ban the sale of puppies to third parties, has long called for an end to the sale of puppies in pet shops and by other third party retailers.

Third party sales are an underhand practice designed to protect

puppy farmers with terrible consequences for dog welfare. Puppy buyers unknowingly purchase a puppy from a seemingly nice dealer in pleasant surroundings, who would in fact have purchased the puppy from a backstreet dealer who has given no thought to their health and welfare.

There is simply no way that a responsible breeder would ever sell a puppy to a pet shop or a pet dealer and we are delighted to see this issue getting the attention that it deserves. Good breeders, such as Kennel Club Assured Breeders, always insist on speaking at length to potential puppy buyers to ensure their pups will be given good homes.

Launching the call for evidence on a ban, Environment Secretary Michael Gove invited all interested parties to share their views by 2 May 2018 on how this could best be introduced.

The government recently consulted on plans to increase maximum prison sentences for animal abusers to five years and recognise animal sentience in domestic law. The [consultation](#) closed on 31 January and we are now considering the responses. We will set out next steps in due course.

1. For further information on this press release, please contact the Defra press office on 020 8225 7318.

[Speech: Reflection on Progress and Challenges in Kosovo](#)

Thank you Mr President

And thank you Special Representative Tanin for your briefing and the Secretary-General's report.

Mr President, as Ambassador Çitaku reminded us, this month marks ten years since Kosovo became a sovereign state. Let us reflect on the progress that has been achieved in this time. The people of Kosovo have participated in three Parliamentary elections since declaring independence in 2008, as well as two country-wide mayoral and municipal elections. Kosovo has also shown solid economic growth, and is now among the top ten countries for starting a business according to the World Bank's Doing Business 2018 report, jumping from 60th to 40th place in that same report's ranking for ease of doing business. And recent action towards full integration of Kosovo's judiciary within the EU-facilitated dialogue underscores a real commitment to progress and stability. This is not the same country it was 10 years ago when UNMIK was first established.

This is not to say Kosovo is without its challenges: building a democracy takes time. The genuinely competitive local elections in the majority of municipalities in Kosovo were a welcome sign of healthy democratic competition, but we continue to be concerned by allegations of intimidation in Kosovan-Serb municipalities.

Additionally, we welcome the public statement by President Hashim Thaçi on February 1st that the Kosovo Specialist Chambers “cannot and will not be abrogated”, and we hope to see the initiative in the Kosovo Assembly formally removed in the coming days, ensuring that the Chambers’ important work to maintain justice and the rule of law will continue.

We continue to urge Kosovo authorities to take all possible steps to swiftly resolve the murder of Oliver Ivanović, which has increased the local tensions in North Mitrovica.

However, these concerns should not diminish the progress that has been made by Kosovo. Kosovo can continue to build on its progress by transitioning UNMIK institutions to Kosovan institutions or other international organizations. While we appreciate UNMIK’s years of work in Kosovo, it is time for a leaner, more efficient Mission to focus on more tightly defined priorities that take into account all of the progress Kosovo has made in the last ten years.

Kosovo’s challenges are far less severe than those of the fledgling nation that UNMIK first arrived to. And thus, it does not require a UN Mission of this size. Moreover, yesterday in the open debate in this Council which you chaired, the UK called for a Security Council that focuses on present and future challenges; with all of the world’s pressing challenges, checking in on Kosovo’s good progress every three months with these meetings is simply not a good use of this Council’s time. In closing, let me reiterate the longstanding UK position that it is past time for this Council to meet less frequently on this issue.

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News story: Counter-terror policing awarded funds for Parsons Green response

This move comes in addition to the [£24 million of new money for this financial year already announced](#) for the forces across the country that responded to the other attacks in London and Manchester in 2017.

The Minister for Policing, Nick Hurd announced the funding as the 2018/19 police funding settlement was debated in Parliament.

He said:

The tragedy of 5 terrorist attacks in 2017 has sadly reinforced the threat we face from terrorism so it is right that we are increasing funding for counter-terrorism policing both this year and next.

In September we announced £24 million of new money this year going to forces across the country to meet the costs relating to the tragic terror attacks.

I am also pleased to confirm that the Government has agreed to provide a further £4 million this year to meet the costs arising from the attack at Parsons Green.

Separately, in recognition of the unprecedented terrorist threat we currently face, [the government announced in December a £50 million increase to counter terrorism policing budget](#) for next year. This brings the budget to £757 million and will help ensure counter-terrorism policing has the resources it needs to respond and keep people safe.

[The government has already committed to increase spending on counter-terrorism](#) by 30% over five years from £11.7 billion to £15.1 billion and has also provided £144 million over the spending review period for a national uplift in armed policing capability and funding for an additional 1,900 officers at the security and intelligence agencies.

It is also reviewing its counter-terrorism strategy CONTEST to ensure that the government is responding to the threat from terrorism both now and in the future.

Press release: Parliament approves real terms increase in funding for local authorities

Parliament has today (7 February 2018) approved the funding settlement for English local authorities that will see a real terms increase in available resources over the next 2 years and give them access to over £200 billion from 2015 to 2020 to deliver the high-quality services their local communities need.

Ahead of today's Parliamentary debate Communities Secretary announced extra funding to help local authorities meet the needs of vulnerable people and support services in rural areas.

A further £150 million will be available to those councils providing adult social care. In addition, £16 million will be made available to councils providing services in rural areas, taking the total rural services grant to £81 million – the highest it has ever been.

This follows consultation with local government on the funding plans announced in December that included giving councils additional financial freedoms to deliver services for their most vulnerable residents while protecting Council Tax payers from excessive increases in their bills. The threshold at which councils must hold a referendum before raising Council Tax has been set in line with inflation at 3%.

Ten additional business retention rates pilots – for areas of varying sizes and location – were also confirmed. These areas will keep 100% of growth in business rates, which will stay in communities and be spent on local priorities.

Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, Sajid Javid said:

Parliament has today approved a settlement that strikes a balance between relieving growing pressure on local government whilst ensuring that hard-pressed taxpayers do not face excessive bills.

We have listened to representations made and delivered on these requests: a real terms increase in resources over the next 2 years, more freedom and fairness, and greater certainty to plan and secure value for money.

Government has also launched a review of local authorities' needs and resources to enable a new funding system to be devised. Ministers are encouraging local authorities to respond to the [consultation](#) ahead of the deadline on 12 March 2018.

The settlement for local government sees a real terms increase in resources to local government over the next 2 years (£44.3 billion in 2017 to 2018 to £45.6 billion in 2019 to 2020)

In December the threshold at which local authorities must hold a referendum in order to raise Council Tax was confirmed in line with inflation (3%). This change, combined with the additional flexibility on the Adult Social Care precept confirmed last year, gives local authorities support in relieving pressure on local services – including adults and children’s social care.

Following feedback from the sector as part of the consultation, the government has today also announced some additional measures:

- £150 million Adult Social Care Support Grant in 2018 to 2019
- a further £16 million for Rural Services Delivery Grant in 2018 to 2019 to allow for funding commensurate with 2016 to 2017 levels

In December, 10 additional business retention rates pilots – for areas of varying sizes and location – were confirmed. It is expected that combined these will raise over £150 million in 2018 to 2019, which will stay in communities and be spent on local priorities.

The Communities Secretary also published a [consultation on need and resources](#) in December that aims to implement a new system based on its findings in 2020 to 2021.