

**TOM PURSGLOVE MP**  
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

13<sup>th</sup> December 2023

*Jean Contrevent,*

**RE: KEPT ANIMALS BILL - CAT THEFT**

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of your concerns about pet theft, in particular relating to cats; I have read your comments with interest.

I would like to assure you that I fully recognise that the theft of a much-loved pet can have a huge impact on both pets and families. In 2021, the Government set up the Pet Theft Taskforce to investigate concerns about a perceived increase in pet theft. This taskforce gathered, researched and commissioned work to build a clear evidence base of the issue and worked with the police, law enforcement, and experts, to formulate recommendations. Since publication of the report, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Home Office and the Ministry of Justice have been working on implementing the taskforce's recommendations.

I am assured that the Government remains fully committed to delivering its manifesto commitments on animal welfare. I am aware that the *Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill*, introduced in June 2021, faced the risk of scope-creep. In light of this, and the successful progress made so far with single-issue legislation, the Government will be taking forward the measures originally in the *Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill* individually when parliamentary time allows. Ministers believe this to be the quickest and most effective way of achieving the Government's stated aims for animal welfare. I have noted your suggestion for cats to be included in the offence of pet abduction, and my ministerial colleagues recognise that campaigners have called for this. I will continue to monitor this issue closely.

More widely, the Government has legislated to make microchipping cats compulsory. The new rules mean that cats must be microchipped before they reach 20 weeks of age. I am assured that this will make it easier for lost or stray pet cats to be reunited with their owners and returned home safely.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

*With best wishes,*

**TOM PURSGLOVE MP**  
**MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT**  
**CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**