

# Clamping down on animal cruelty

I participated in the debate on the Animal Cruelty (Sentencing) Bill yesterday.

Several constituents contacted me to support it. I intended to, as I have long thought we need to do more to protect animals in our care and to punish those who think cruel abuse of animals is acceptable. We were told some harrowing stories of what cruel people have done to dogs in their care, deliberately injuring them for the warped amusement of the owner.

The Bill reinforces the Animal Welfare Act of 2006 giving the courts the right to impose a prison sentence of up to one year for a summary conviction and up to five years for a conviction on indictment. The aim is to provide a stronger deterrent to those thinking of being cruel to animals, and a more appropriate punishment to those who do serious and sustained harm to an animal.