

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT
BY DEPUTY K.C. LEWIS OF ST. SAVIOUR**

ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY, 16th JANUARY 2007

Question

Following the recent tragedy in the United Kingdom involving a pit bull terrier, is the Minister confident that the current law in Jersey regarding dangerous breeds of dogs is adequate and, if not, what plans, if any, does he have to tighten controls?

Answer

It is an offence to import either a dog which is one of the four breeds stipulated in the UK Dangerous Dogs Act, or any dog of a fighting type, without an import licence, issued by the Minister of Home Affairs. No licences enabling such an import have been issued and when the legislation first came into force in 1992, there was no evidence that any fighting type of dogs were already on Jersey. Imports are monitored by staff from both Customs and Environment Departments.

The Dogs (Jersey) Law 1961 requires all dogs, with exceptions such as guide dogs, to be licensed. It requires the Connétable of the Parish to keep a register of all licences issued. Various measures concerning dog control are imposed on owners. Article 11 empowers the Magistrate's Court to require a dog which has been shown to be dangerous to be kept under proper control or to be destroyed.

Additionally, under the Protection of Animals (Jersey) Law 1980 it is an offence to cause an animal unnecessary suffering. The use of dogs for fighting undoubtedly causes unnecessary suffering. The Animal Welfare (Jersey) Law 2004 which is the subject of an Appointed Day Act includes an offence to keep or use an animal for the purpose of fighting.

In conclusion, there is no evidence of dog fighting in Jersey. Existing controls are effective and will be strengthened by the coming into force of the Animal Welfare Law.