

Dear Deputy Jeune,

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel's review of Animal Welfare & Control, including the Draft Animal Welfare (Jersey) Law 202- (P.97/2025).

I am responding on behalf of The Barkley Club (Formerly K9 to 5) and R&R Livery. Our services include a professional dog daycare, enrichment and training business, and commercial equine rehabilitation and retirement livery. We operate two licensed sites: one centrally located facility designed for smaller and low energy dogs, and a second rural site in St. Martin for our commercial livery clients, as well as larger, more energetic dogs that require space, structured enrichment and outdoor exercise in a controlled environment. Our business involves the daily care, supervision and management of a significant number of animals and staff, and as such we have a strong interest in how the Draft Law will operate in practice.

General observations

Overall, we welcome the intention of the Draft Law to modernise animal welfare legislation, raise standards, and align Jersey more closely with contemporary UK and international best practice. We believe the Draft Law has the potential to significantly improve animal welfare outcomes across the Island, particularly by addressing poorly regulated or informal animal-related activities, whilst introducing a pragmatic approach as to the spaces available to business owners to facilitate the best possible care for animals.

As a welfare-led and transparent operator, much of what is proposed aligns with how we already work. However, there are areas where additional clarity, guidance and consistency will be essential to ensure the Draft Law supports responsible businesses rather than unintentionally penalising those who engage openly with regulation.

Article 4 Responsibility for animals

We support the principle that responsibility for animals should extend beyond ownership to include those who are "in charge" of an animal at a given time. This reflects the reality of modern animal care businesses where responsibility is shared between owners, managers and trained staff.

In practice, however, this places a significant level of legal responsibility on individual employees working under the direction of a licensed business. We believe further guidance would be helpful to clarify how responsibility is shared between business owners, supervisors and frontline staff who are acting in accordance with established procedures, training and risk assessments. Clear guidance would help avoid situations where individual staff members are disproportionately exposed to liability despite acting appropriately.

Part 3 Protection of animal welfare

We strongly support the expanded duty to meet animals' welfare needs, including mental well-being and the ability to exhibit normal behaviour. This reflects modern understanding of animal welfare and supports enrichment-based models of care such as ours.

The introduction of improvement notices is particularly welcome. From an operational perspective, this is a constructive and proportionate tool that allows issues to be identified and addressed before enforcement action is taken. We believe this approach benefits animal welfare while also encouraging cooperation and compliance from responsible operators.

The effectiveness of this Part will depend on consistent interpretation by inspectors, evidence-based standards, and clear benchmarks for what constitutes "reasonable steps" in different contexts, such as daycare, transport, training and livery.

Part 5 Licensing, fairness and consistency

We recognise that licensing of animal-related activities can play an important role in ensuring accountability and consistent standards. We are already licensed for both of our sites and operate transparently within existing regulatory frameworks.

However, our experience has highlighted a significant imbalance within the sector. Despite our commitment to compliance, we have faced prolonged and difficult planning challenges. At the same time, it is widely known within the sector that it is commonplace for professional and well-meaning animal-related businesses to operate informally from agricultural fields without disclosing their locations, often due to fear of enforcement or closure due to a mixed use, which, in the absence of construction activities, is quite clearly temporary in nature.

This creates a situation in which businesses that actively engage with regulation, disclose their sites and invest in welfare-led infrastructure are exposed to greater scrutiny than those operating outside the system. Jersey has a large dog-owning population as well as many excellent animal care providers.

We see the Draft Law as an opportunity to address this imbalance. A clear, proportionate and consistently applied licensing framework could help identify all operators, raise standards across the sector, and protect animal welfare without disproportionately impacting businesses that seek to engage with authorities. We would welcome clarity on how the Draft Law will be used in practice to bring informal or unlicensed operators up to standard, rather than penalising those who have sought to do the right thing from the outset.

Codes of practice and land use considerations, Equine and Canine

It is also important for Jersey to consider where dogs are realistically expected to exercise and be managed. Jersey's population has increased in recent decades, and public walking routes and green lanes are increasingly congested, creating welfare, safety, and environmental pressures for dogs, owners, businesses, and the wider community.

In this context, there is a strong argument for the planned and regulated use of agricultural fields (that are not actively used for farming) for dog-related activities. As has already been recognised by the States of Jersey with Equine businesses, it is the case that dogs have historically been an integral part of rural and agricultural life, working alongside livestock and horses. They remain closely connected to land-based practices and have the potential to offer a significant contribution and reinvigoration to a struggling rural economy. This is clearly supported by ownership trends: 2018 figures show the number of Equines on Island as 760, having decreased from 850 in 2011, whereas data shows the number of dogs in 2025 at 10,547, up from 7,080 in 2013.

Yet, while horses are recognised as an agricultural activity even in a commercial setting, dogs are often treated solely as a commercial consideration when cared for professionally in a rural setting.

As Jersey modernises its animal welfare framework, we believe there is an opportunity to adopt a more balanced and realistic approach to land use — one that recognises dogs as part of the Island's rural and agricultural landscape, allows facilities to operate transparently and in cohesion with agriculture, whilst reducing pressure on public spaces.

Responses to broader questions raised by the Panel

Clarity and understanding:

The structure of the Draft Law is clear, but its practical application will depend heavily on secondary legislation and guidance, particularly for animal businesses.

Balance between welfare and public safety:

We believe the Draft Law broadly achieves a reasonable balance. Well-managed facilities improve both animal welfare and public safety. Consistency and proportionality in enforcement will be key.

Issues not currently addressed:

Greater recognition of the diversity of animal-related businesses would be helpful, with tailored expectations rather than a one-size-fits-all approach. Trends in ownership clearly indicate that the diversification of the rural economy should consider canine facilities at least on par with equine facilities.

Consultation:

We were not directly consulted during the development of the Draft Law, despite being an established animal welfare business. We would welcome greater engagement with operational stakeholders.

Further guidance required:

Yes, particularly in relation to licensing thresholds, staff responsibility, inspection processes and land use expectations.

Proportionality of offences and penalties:

Strong penalties underline the importance of welfare, but also reinforce the need for clear guidance and improvement-led enforcement where no harm has occurred.

Overall impact:

If implemented thoughtfully, the Draft Law has the potential to significantly improve animal welfare and professionalise the sector. For responsible businesses, it should act as support rather than a barrier.

Thank you for considering our submission. We would be pleased to engage further with the Panel or provide additional operational insight if helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Letitia Lapidus

Director

The Barkley Club (formerly K9 to 5) & R&R Livery

hello@thebarkley.club