



Bob Neill MP
Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Department for Communities and Local Government

Eland House
Bressenden Place
London SW1E 5DU

Tel: 0303 444 3450
Fax: 0303 444 3289
E-Mail: eric.pickles@communities.gsi.gov.uk

www.communities.gov.uk

Mary Creagh MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Dear Mary,

20 MAY 2011

Review of Statutory Duties

During the Parliamentary debate on 19 May 2011 in response to your Urgent Question 'to ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to explain her decision not to ban the use of wild animals in circuses' you alleged that the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government 'proposes to remove the powers of local authorities to prosecute owners for animal cruelty as part of his so-called review of the "burdens" on local authorities' (Hansard, 19 May 2011, col. 498).

This is simply untrue and has no basis in fact.

My Department is leading a review of statutory duties with the aim of determining which duties actually support councils in carrying out their functions and which ones serve to create unnecessary burdens and should be removed.

The Government is looking to remove unnecessary, old and outdated statutory burdens imposed on local councils from Whitehall. Therefore the review is as much about ensuring vital duties are retained as it is about removing unnecessary burdens. There is no implication that any particular duty on the list is being considered for removal. Any proposed changes to statutory duties which come about as a result of the review will subsequently be properly considered and consulted on where necessary. This has been clearly stated on our website and in statements to the House.

Your assertion that we are removing protection for animals is without any basis.

This kind of scaremongering, without even a shred of justification, is irresponsible and demeans the political process. I am sure you will wish to provide a correction at the earliest possible opportunity.

I am copying this letter to the Minister of State for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs and placing a copy of the letter in the public domain.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bob Neill".

BOB NEILL MP