

Welfare of Dogs (Scotland) Bill

Financial Memorandum

Introduction

1. As required under Rule 9.3.2 of the Parliament's Standing Orders, this Financial Memorandum is published to accompany the Welfare of Dogs (Scotland) Bill, introduced in the Scottish Parliament on 20 June 2023.
2. The following other accompanying documents are published separately:
 - statements on legislative competence by the Presiding Officer and the member who introduced the Bill (SP Bill 32–LC);
 - Explanatory Notes (SP Bill 32–EN);
 - a Policy Memorandum (SP Bill 32–PM);
 - a Delegated Powers Memorandum (SP Bill 32–DPM).

Background

Policy objectives of the Bill

3. The Welfare of Dogs (Scotland) Bill aims to improve the health and wellbeing of dogs throughout their lives, by establishing a more responsible and informed approach to acquiring and owning a dog; and by making provision for the regulation of the selling or transferring of puppies from unlicensed litters.

Main provisions of the Bill

4. The Bill requires the Scottish Ministers to make a new code of practice that should be followed by a person who is considering acquiring a dog to keep as a pet, and by a person who is considering selling or giving away a dog to someone else. The Bill sets out the essential content of the code, including the questions a potential puppy or dog owner should consider for themselves before they take on the animal as a pet.
5. The Bill also sets out that, under the code, a person considering acquiring a puppy in Scotland from its first owner should ensure either that that person is a licensed

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breeder and that the litter was born as part of the licensed activity, or, at such a time that a register of unlicensed litters is operational, that the litter has been registered. The prospective owner should, as far as is practicable, meet the person they are acquiring the puppy from and see the puppy with its mother; and a puppy should not be acquired, sold or given away before it reaches the age of eight weeks.

6. The code will also set out that the prospective new owner should sign documentation to acknowledge that they understand the responsibilities and costs involved in dog ownership. This should also be signed by the person selling or giving away the dog to demonstrate that they have checked that the person acquiring the dog has considered all of the questions that are set out in the certificate.

7. The Bill includes provision for Scottish Ministers to make regulations which prohibit the first owner of a litter of puppies from selling or giving away a puppy from that litter or allowing someone else to do so if the litter is not registered. While it will be for Scottish Ministers to determine if and when to use the powers conferred upon it, the Member's intention is that the Scottish Government should use the powers to set up a register of unlicensed litters. The intention is that anyone breeding fewer than three litters a year (the threshold for requiring a breeding licence) should have to register each litter they breed.

Code of practice encouraging responsible ownership

Costs on the Scottish Administration

8. The Bill will require Scottish Ministers to make a code of practice (the effect of which must be in accordance with sections 2-4 of the Bill and any other content Scottish Ministers deem to be appropriate) to set out the process that should be followed by anyone considering acquiring a dog or puppy as a pet, and by anyone selling or giving away a puppy or dog to another person to be kept as a pet.

9. The cost of developing the code will fall on the Scottish Administration. As the main elements of the code are set out in the Bill, the cost of producing the code is expected to be minimal. The Police (Ethics, Conduct and Scrutiny) Scotland Bill¹ places a duty on the Chief Constable of Police Scotland to prepare and publish a Code of Ethics and to review the code from time to time. The Financial Memorandum for that Bill² estimates that this will cost £10,000. The Member therefore considers it reasonable to estimate that the production and publication of the Code of Practice for her Bill will incur similar costs, and that those costs will be absorbed using existing Scottish Government budgets.

10. While there is no set timeframe in which the Code of Practice must be revised, the Member considers it reasonable to estimate that this will be carried out every 5 years. This estimate is based on the Police Code of Ethics as referred to above, which

¹ [Police \(Ethics, Conduct and Scrutiny\) \(Scotland\) Bill \(parliament.scot\)](#)

² Police (Ethics, Conduct and Scrutiny) (Scotland) [Financial Memorandum accessible \(parliament.scot\)](#)

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must be revised at least every five years. Based on the estimated cost for the Police Code of Ethics, the Member therefore considers that a cost of £10,000 may be incurred roughly every five years in revising the code. However, as the Scottish Government is only required to publish the code when the revisions materially alter its effect, the cost may be less where minor changes are made.

11. The code of practice will set out that potential dog owners should sign a certificate to acknowledge that they understand the responsibilities and costs involved in dog ownership. While the Bill sets out the essential content of the certificate, it is for the Scottish Ministers to determine the precise content and layout and determine how the process will work in practice.

12. The Member is of the view that the pro-forma of the certificate will be made available online and it will be for the acquirer or supplier to print it, for them both to sign it and for the acquirer to store it. The Member does not foresee the Scottish Government playing a role in facilitating this process and she therefore expects the cost of this element of the Bill to be minimal and absorbed by existing budgets.

13. The Bill places a duty on Scottish Ministers to publish and promote the code. While it would be for the Scottish Government to determine the terms of the awareness raising campaign, the Member considers that an initial national campaign lasting up to three months would be appropriate in the first instance and supplemented with further promotional work at later stages. The Scottish Government publishes information relating to how much it spends on marketing (or advertising) campaigns. The most recent available figures are for 2021-22.³ The amount spent on each campaign varied greatly, and it is difficult to compare the figures as there is limited information about what each involved. Outwith campaigns specifically related to Covid-19, the advertising spends costs per campaign were on average £149,000.⁴

14. In terms of campaigns comparable to the one proposed in this Bill, in 2019-20 the Scottish Government spent £181,000 on an animal welfare marketing campaign. Adjusted for inflation, this would amount to £207,500 in 2023-24. Further to this, in 2018 and 2019 the Scottish Government ran an extensive campaign on the issue of responsible dog ownership. For the 2018 'Buy a Puppy Safely' campaign, the Scottish Government spent £223,500 (excluding VAT) on the marketing budget.⁵ Adjusted for inflation, this would amount to an estimated £263,000 in 2023-24.

15. Based on the information available on Scottish Government marketing campaigns, and that the Member expects the campaign to build on existing awareness campaigns relating to animal welfare, an indicative figure of between £200,000 and £250,000 is estimated.

³ Scottish Government, Marketing spend document 20221-22 [Marketing spend 2021 to 2022 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/Marketing-spend-2021-to-2022) accessed 30 May 2023.

⁴ All figures over £1000 have been rounded to the nearest £500

⁵ Session 5 Welfare of Dogs (Scotland) Bill Financial Memorandum [Financial Memorandum \(parliament.scot\)](https://www.parliament.scot/Financial-Memorandum) accessed 25 May 2023.

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16. It is important to note that, as the Scottish Government sets aside a budget for marketing campaigns, the Scottish Ministers could fulfil their duty to promote awareness and understanding within the existing budget – either via a full marketing campaign, or via the lower-profile approach. Additional costs would only be incurred if the overall budget for marketing campaigns was increased as a result of the Bill.

17. The Bill sets out the mandatory information that should be included in the code. This information must be included in any revisions made to the code, although the Scottish Government may add additional information. On the basis that the core information contained in the code will remain the same, the Member does not foresee substantial costs being incurred in publicising any revisions to the code. However, she does consider it important that any significant new elements of the code are publicised so that the dog-owning public are aware of any such changes. This would also provide an opportunity for awareness of the code's existence to be raised.

18. The Member expects the main publicity costs to be incurred by the initial promotion of the code of practice and that the cost of raising awareness of any revisions to the code would therefore be significantly less. The member considers that the cost may be in line with one of the Scottish Government's less expensive marketing campaigns, noting that the spending on 2021-22 campaigns such as 'Ready Scotland', 'Domestic Abuse' and 'Hate Crime' were all under £55,000. She therefore suggests further promotion of the code of practice may cost around £55,000. While there is no set timeframe in which the code should be revised, the Member suggests that changes of significance, and therefore requiring awareness-raising would be every five years at a minimum and ideally more frequently.

Costs on local authorities

19. Under the code, in the case of a sale or transfer by the first owner of a puppy or younger dog (up to the age of 12 months), prospective owners should check that the person they are acquiring a dog from is either a licensed breeder or, at such a time as a register has been established, has registered the litter. If individuals report unregistered litters to local authorities, administration and investigation costs on local authorities (who, it is anticipated, will remain the main enforcement agencies) may increase.

Costs on other bodies, individuals and businesses

20. An increase in responsible dog ownership may initially result in more work for the Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Scottish SPCA), as members of the public become aware of issues that indicate poor welfare conditions for puppies and their mothers, or become aware that an advertisement for puppies does not include a registration or breeding licence number.

21. As part of the code of practice, prospective acquirers are required to meet with the prospective suppliers and to see the puppy with its mother, where practicable. The Member acknowledges that this may incur some costs for the prospective acquirer as they would have to travel to the place where the puppy and its mother are homed. The

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cost incurred would vary dependent on how far the prospective acquirer had to travel and their chosen method of transport.

Savings for other bodies, individuals and businesses

22. It is expected that the Bill's provisions will lead to savings for individuals in the form of reduced veterinary bills if the overall health of the puppy population improves and if they are less likely to buy a puppy that has been bred under poor welfare conditions.

23. It is expected that the Bill's provision will, in the long run, provide savings for rehoming and rescue centres if more responsible ownership leads to fewer puppies finding their way to these centres. While it is difficult to estimate the savings that may be made as a result of this, the Member understands that the costs of running rehoming centres are substantial, with the Scottish SPCA estimating that it costs £42,000 per day to run nine rescue and rehoming centres.^{6 7} For this reason, the SSPCA charges a rehoming fee to those acquiring a dog. Its website lists the fee for a puppy as £400, for a dog under 8 years old as £300 and for a dog over 8 years old as £250.

24. It is also expected that the Bill's provision will, in the long run, provide savings for local authorities, the police, the Scottish SPCA and other organisations if the Bill succeeds in its aim of reducing illegal and irresponsible breeding.

Regulations: Register of unlicensed litters

25. The Bill provides Scottish Ministers the power to set up a register of unlicensed litters, via regulations. On the basis that the Scottish Government will establish a register, some estimated costs are set out below.

26. The Financial Memorandum for the Session 5 Welfare of Dogs (Scotland) Bill estimated that in 2020 4165 breeders would be required to register a puppy under a register of unlicensed litters.⁸ In terms of the number of individual litters required to be on such a register, the Financial Memorandum estimated this to be 5,832 litters. Given that the number of dogs bred in Scotland has risen in the last few years, this number is now likely to be higher. These breeders of litters are those breeding one or two litters of puppies per year. So, these are breeders who would not meet the threshold for registering as a licensed breeder under the Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (Scotland) Regulations 2021.

⁶ [Rehoming FAQs | SSPCA \(scottishspca.org\)](#)

⁷ Rehoming centres are not limited to dogs.

⁸ Session 5 Welfare of Dogs (Scotland) Bill Financial Memorandum [Financial Memorandum \(parliament.scot\)](#) accessed 25 May 2023.

Costs on the Scottish Administration

27. While it will be for the Scottish Ministers to set out the detail of the register, it is the Member's intention that it should be in electronic form and that elements of it should be publicly searchable. The Scottish Ministers may decide to charge a fee for registering. This will provide Scottish Ministers with the option of passing on any costs for establishing and maintaining a register, to those individuals that are required to register and of making the register fully cost recoverable.

28. The Member envisages the register being established online in such a way that breeders can create their own entries quickly and easily, and later update their entries in the same way. As a result, most register entries should have zero cost implications. The Scottish Government will be required to fund the initial establishment of the register and routine maintenance and IT support costs.

29. A small proportion of dog breeders who lack internet access, confidence with an online portal, or for reasons related to disability, may need to have an alternative means of creating a register entry. For example, this may involve sending the required information by post to those responsible for operating the register, who would then enter it onto the register on the breeder's behalf. There would be a small administrative cost associated with this (primarily in staff time) so that the online portal is established in a way that ensures accessibility.

30. If the Scottish Ministers choose to charge a fee for each entry created, this may not therefore be just to cover the marginal cost of that entry (which would effectively be zero) but could represent a contribution to repaying the set up and covering the general maintenance costs of the register, including for entries that need to be added by Scottish Government officials.

Establishing the register

31. As mentioned above, the Scottish Ministers will have a range of options open to them in terms of how to set up the register. They may choose to use an already established online portal system and/or database, which can be amended to incorporate the registration of puppy litters, or to set up a new separate system. Alternatively, the Scottish Ministers may choose to delegate the establishment and operation of the register to a third party.

32. There are a number of registers established by the Scottish Government which are set up in a similar way to the puppy litter register required by the Bill. The Landlord Register, Letting Agent Register and Property Factors Register operate through the Scottish Government's online gov.scot portal. Scottish Ministers would have the option of establishing the puppy litter register through the same portal.

33. Another comparable register is the tobacco and nicotine vapour product retailers register ("the tobacco register"), established under the Tobacco and Primary Medical Services (Scotland) Act 2010. The tobacco register operates at a Scotland-wide level,

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requiring licensed sellers of tobacco products in Scotland to be registered, with the enforcement of the licensing regime carried out by local authorities. It operates through an online registration system and provides for registration by post, if necessary. Members of the public can search for tobacco and nicotine vapour retailers using a number of different filters such as premises name, postcode and local authority area.

34. During the preparation the Session 5 Welfare of Dogs (Scotland) Bill, the Scottish Government's Tobacco Control Team confirmed that the original tobacco register cost approximately £20,000. The total number of active premises listed on the register (as of 6 March 2023) is 11,216.⁹

35. Due to the similarity between the functionality of the tobacco register with the Member's policy intentions for the register of unlicensed litters, it is estimated that the cost of establishing the puppy register will be comparable to the £20,000 cost of establishing the tobacco register. Adjusted for inflation, this cost is £21,500 for the 2023/24 financial year.

36. The Scottish Government may produce guidance on acquiring and owning a dog, and looking after puppies, for those acquiring a puppy and for those required to register a litter of puppies. It is expected that this guidance will be in electronic form (for example, an email sent to the breeder at the point of registration).

37. It is estimated that the cost of producing guidance will be minimal. The Financial Memorandum for the Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019¹⁰ estimated that the costs of publishing statutory guidance on investigative interviews would be £2000. As a further example, the Financial Memorandum for the Islands (Scotland) Act¹¹ estimated that the cost of publishing a National Islands Plan would be £5000 per plan. The Member therefore expects that the cost of publishing guidance would be between £2000 and £5000 and absorbed by existing Scottish Government budgets. Should the Scottish Government choose to revise the guidance, the Member estimates a further £2000 to £5000 could be occurred each time. Further to this, Scottish Ministers will have the option to pass on the cost of producing guidance to individuals that require to be registered, as part of any fee for registering.

Maintaining the register

38. It is expected that the ongoing cost of maintaining the register would fall on Scottish Ministers (or on the register operator if Ministers arrange for someone else to be the operator). Ministers may choose to set a fee for registering a litter, so as to provide that fee income offsets at least some of these operating costs.

⁹ Register of tobacco and nicotine vapour product retailers [Register of Tobacco and Nicotine Vapour Product Retailers - STRR \(tobaccoregisterscotland.org\)](https://www.tobaccoregisterscotland.org), accessed 30 May 2023.

¹⁰ Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019 [financial-memorandum.pdf \(parliament.scot\)](https://www.parliament.scot/financial-memorandum.pdf)

¹¹ [Islands \(Scotland\) Bill Financial Memorandum \(parliament.scot\)](https://www.parliament.scot/islands-scotland-bill-financial-memorandum)

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39. In 2020, the Tobacco Control Team¹² estimated that “the annual costs average about £15,000”. It is the Member’s policy that the register should be kept updated, as far as possible, by registrants, with a minimum amount of central oversight. It is therefore expected that, based on the tobacco register costs, the cost of maintaining the register of puppy litters would be about £15,000 per annum, depending on how Scottish Ministers choose to fulfil the requirement in the Bill to establish and maintain a register of litter of puppies, and whether they charge a fee for registration. Adjusted for inflation, this would cost an estimated £16,000 per annum in 2023-24. Should Scottish Ministers opt to charge a fee for registration, it is expected that the fee income would be paid into the Scottish Consolidated Fund.

Public awareness

40. The Bill requires Scottish Ministers to take reasonable steps to ensure public awareness and understanding of the licensed breeding regime and, at such a time as it is in place, the register of unlicensed litters. It is for the Scottish Government to determine the content and means of raising awareness. However, the Member considers that the cost incurred may be of a similar range as the marketing costs set out for raising public awareness on the code of practice as set out in paragraphs 12-15 above. She therefore estimates that raising public awareness of the licensing and registration regimes will cost between £200,000 and £250,000.

41. It is important to note that, as the Scottish Government sets aside a budget for marketing campaigns, the Scottish Ministers could fulfil their duty to promote awareness and understanding within the existing budget – either via a full marketing campaign, or via the lower-profile approach. Additional costs would only be incurred if the overall budget for marketing campaigns was increased as a result of the Bill.

42. The Member does not anticipate that the Scottish Government will establish a register within the first year of the Bill being in force. It is anticipated that any further campaigns to increase public awareness would be undertaken as part of the same awareness raising exercises undertaken to promote the breeding licence register which is already established in existing legislation.

Costs on the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service and Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service

43. The Bill provides for Scottish Ministers to make regulations which would prohibit the sale, giving away or advertising of a puppy aged under 12 months except in certain prescribed circumstances. It allows for Scottish Ministers to make provision via regulations in order to ensure compliance with any regulations made in relation to the establishment and operation of a register of unlicensed litters of puppies. This includes the power to make offences of failure to comply with the provisions made in regulations.

¹² Tobacco Control Team information [Contact - STRR \(tobaccoregisterscotland.org\)](https://www.tobaccoregisterscotland.org) Accessed 25 May 2023.

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44. While it would be for Scottish Ministers to determine which offences, if any, to make the member suggests that any other offences could include knowingly providing false information during the registration process; failing to notify certain changes to registration information; failing to update the register when there are no puppies left to sell or give away, or knowingly providing false information in doing so; and failing to include the registration number in an advertisement.

45. The offences may carry a maximum penalty, on summary conviction, of imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 months or a fine not exceeding £40,000 (or both) depending on the offence. It is difficult to estimate the number of individuals that may fail to conform to the new requirements, as these requirements have not previously been in place.

46. Scottish Government statistics on the cost of the criminal justice system set out that average prosecution cost for summary procedure in the Sheriff Court is £444, with equivalent court costs totalling £430. It can therefore be estimated that, should the Scottish Ministers introduce offences relating to a register of unlicensed litters it would cost in the region of £874 per successful prosecution.¹³

47. However, if the Bill succeeds in its aim to encourage more responsible breeding and ownership of dogs, it is likely that more people will comply with the requirement to register a litter, and the number of investigations and prosecutions for failure to comply will be minimal.

Costs on local authorities

48. There may be increased demands on local authorities for enforcing the register. Scottish Ministers may make regulations to set out who is to enforce this part of the Bill. It is expected that this will be carried out largely by local authorities. Scottish Ministers may also make regulations to allow particular persons or bodies access to the register, or to authorise them to be given information derived from the register. To this end it is also expected that local authorities will have access to the data contained in the register. A policy aim of the register is also to provide local authorities with the ability to more easily monitor those that have reached the licensing threshold. It is expected that, as at present, individual local authorities will decide the amount of resource they can apply to enforcing the licensing regime and register entries.

49. The Scottish Ministers will also have the option of designing the register in such a way as to aid enforcement for local authorities, such as notifying the relevant local authority when a new entry is created for their local authority area, or when a person registers three litters within a 12-month period (and therefore that they require a breeding licence). In addition, should Scottish Ministers create a requirement for the registration number to be present on the advertisement, this should aid the monitoring

¹³ Costs of the Criminal Justice System in Scotland dataset , accessed 25 May 2023 [\[ARCHIVED CONTENT\]](#)
[Costs of the Criminal Justice System in Scotland dataset \(nrscotland.gov.uk\)](#)

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of puppy sales and compliance with the requirement to register, as each advertisement will be tied to a name and an address through the register.

50. It is reasonable to assume that the amount currently spent by local authorities on officers responsible for investigating animal welfare issues will increase as a result of the Bill. Figures provided to the Scottish Parliament Public Audit and Post-Legislative Scrutiny Committee in 2021¹⁴ reflected a wide variance in the amount spent annually by different local authorities dependent on “the nature of their area, the level of enquiries/complaints they receive and the level of activity in relation to dog control work.” The estimates provided by local authorities covered a range of work including dog barking complaints, fouling, strays, microchipping, welfare visits etc. Some councils had full time or part time animal welfare officers, others had full time or part time environmental protection officers undertaking work relating to dog welfare and dog control, others had dog wardens which also covered wider animal welfare responsibilities.

51. Visits requiring to be made in response to local authorities being notified of unregistered litters under this Bill would add to the workload of existing officers, and also to the workload of SPCA inspectors receiving associated call outs. It is challenging to estimate the number of litters that will remain unregistered and then how many of those will be reported to local authorities (or the SPCA).

52. Based on figures provided to the PAPLS Committee and also figures provided by the Scottish SPCA in relation to the Dogs (Protection of Livestock) (Amendment) (Scotland) Bill¹⁵ (please see paragraph 53), employing a full-time animal welfare officer costs in the region of £30,000 including pension and national insurance contributions. It is not envisaged the increase in workload for local authority staff would account for a substantial proportion of every officers’ time as the number of litters that are not registered under the new register and also go on to be reported could be relatively low.

53. Details of the number of officials working on dog welfare issues at local authority level is not held centrally. Based on the information provided to PAPLS it is reasonable to assume each local authority typically employs between 0.5 and 3 individuals in relation to dog welfare issues (be it animal welfare officers, or dog wardens or environmental officers covering dog welfare issues). Assuming on average around 5% of every full-time role is taken up with enforcement work related to this Bill (at a cost of approximately £1,500 per FTE), and that there are in total the equivalent of between 40 and 60 local authority full time officials focussing on dog welfare issues across Scotland, then it is estimated that total annual enforcement costs covering all local authorities would range between £60,000 and £90,000 per year. Based on this estimated workload, it is not envisaged that additional staff will need to be employed in local authority areas.

¹⁴ [20210212_Dog_Control_Spend_by_Local_Authorities_EH_redacted.pdf \(parliament.scot\)](#) Accessed 20 June 2023

¹⁵ [Microsoft Word - Financial Memorandum Dogs \(Protection of Livestock\) \(Amendment\) \(Scotland\) Bill \(parliament.scot\)](#)

Costs on other bodies, individuals and businesses

54. It is anticipated that, at the time when a register is set up, the majority of the enforcement for complying with the register will be dealt with by local authorities. Should Police Scotland become involved with an incident, the length of time spent dealing with an incident relating to a failure to register a litter of puppies will vary depending on the circumstances. Police Scotland estimates that a constable's time costs £63.50 per hour.¹⁶ While it is difficult to estimate how often Police Scotland will be involved or how much of their time it is likely to take up it is anticipated that incidents relating to a failure to register, that require a police presence or investigation, will be minimal and therefore covered by existing budgets.

55. For individuals, an administration fee for entering a litter into the register may be set by the Scottish Government to cover the costs of the register. This fee will be dependent on how the Scottish Ministers choose to establish and maintain the register, and whether they choose to charge a fee at all. If a fee is charged, Ministers may choose to spread the cost of establishing the register over several years, as the bulk of the cost will be in establishing the register rather than maintaining it. In addition, Scottish Ministers have the option to set the fee at zero for those that they believe should be exempt.

56. Evidence taken by the Scottish Parliament's Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee in 2019 noted that increased public awareness of the illegal puppy trade, following Scottish Government publicity campaigns, led to an increase in calls to the Scottish SPCA.¹⁷ It is therefore expected that, following the introduction of the register and its promotion by the Scottish Government, the Scottish SPCA and other animal welfare organisations may also expect to see an increase in calls from the public reporting suspicious breeding activity, puppy welfare concerns or breeders not complying with the requirement to register. It is hoped that in the longer term that the register and the associated awareness of the need to buy or acquire a puppy from a litter on the register (or from someone on the breeder's register) would reduce the ability of the illegal puppy trade to function and therefore the level of illegal activity will ultimately reduce. On that basis it is hoped the cost of dealing with the actions associated with the illegal puppy trade could reduce over time.

57. The establishment and maintenance of the register will have no direct costs on businesses.

¹⁶ Costs available at [Notify Police Scotland if you're organising an event - Police Scotland](#), accessed 25 May 2023.

¹⁷ Official Report, Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee, 35th Meeting 2019 (Session 5), 17 December 2019, Column 8. Available at: <http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=12427&mode=pdf> Accessed 25 May 2023.

Summary of costs and savings

Code of practice encouraging responsible dog ownership

58. The cost of developing the code of practice is expected to be minimal (as the main elements are set out in the Bill) and to fall within existing Scottish Government budgets. The Member estimates that the code will cost around £10,000 to produce and publish, with around the same cost incurred any time it is revised. There may be increased administration costs for local authorities if there is an increase in members of the public reporting irresponsible breeding or dog ownership to local authorities. Any increase in reports to animal welfare organisations may result in a subsequent increase in costs for those organisations required to process and handle these reports.

59. The Bill places a duty on Scottish Ministers to take reasonable steps to ensure public awareness and understanding of the code of practice. Should the Scottish Ministers choose to promote public awareness and understanding using a campaign similar to recent animal welfare campaigns, this is estimated to cost between £200,000 and £250,000 with estimated further costs of £55,000 every time a significant update is made to the code.

Puppy litter register

60. While the Bill does not require a register of unlicensed litters to be established, the Member would expect the Scottish Government to take steps to do so at an appropriate time. Estimates of setting up and running such a register have therefore been included in this memorandum.

61. There is an estimated cost of £21,500 to the Scottish Ministers to establish the register and £16,000 per annum to maintain the register, with the option of recovering at least part of the cost through a registration fee (see paragraphs 27-35) There may also be a cost to the Scottish Ministers of producing guidance; this is expected to be minimal and met from existing budgets or included in the registration fee.

62. The Scottish Government may produce guidance on acquiring and owning a dog, and looking after puppies, for those acquiring a puppy and for those required to register a litter of puppies. The Member estimates this will cost between £2000 and £5000 each time guidance is produced or updated.

63. The Bill requires Scottish Ministers to take reasonable steps to ensure public awareness and understanding of the licensed breeding regime and, at such a time as it is in place, the register of unlicensed litters. It is for the Scottish Government to determine the content and means of raising awareness. Based on the average cost of Scottish Government marketing campaigns in 2021-22, the Member estimates this will generate a one-off cost of £200,000-£250,000. It is for the Scottish Government to determine if and when to establish a unlicensed litter register and the time at which the cost of such a publicity campaign will be incurred can therefore not be estimated. The

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Member does not anticipate that the Scottish Government will establish a register within the first year of the Bill being in force.

64. It is anticipated that any incidents relating to a failure to register, that require a police presence, will be minimal. Individuals registering a litter of puppies may be required to pay a registration fee set by the Scottish Ministers. The Scottish SPCA and other animal welfare organisations may see an increase in reports of suspicious breeding activity or puppy welfare concerns, resulting in increased costs for dealing with and responding to these reports.

Savings

65. If the Bill's aims are achieved, it is expected that the Bill will lead to savings in the long run as the overall health of the puppy population improves. For individuals there is the possibility of reduced veterinary bills, and, for rehoming and rescue centres, more responsible dog ownership may lead to fewer puppies finding their way to these centres. For local authorities, the police and other organisations, if the Bill succeeds in its aim of reducing illegal and irresponsible breeding, there may be fewer cases to investigate and prosecute.

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Summary of costs

Code of Practice	Year one after bill coming into force	Every 5 years (estimated)	On date to be determined by Scottish Government
Scottish Administration			
Producing and publishing code	£10,000	£10,000	
Raising public awareness	£200,000-£250,000	£55,000	
Register of unlicensed litters			
Establishing register			£21,500
Maintaining register			£16,000 (recurring cost each year that the register is in place)
Publishing guidance		£2,000-£5,000	£2,000-£5,000
Local Authorities			
Cost of enforcing register			£60,000-£90,000 (recurring cost each year that the register is in place)
Other costs			
Raising public awareness of licensing/registration arrangements			£200,000-£250,000
Total	£210,000-£260,000	£67,000-£70,000	£299,500-£382,500 (plus £76,000-£106,000 for each year following that the register is in place.)

This document relates to the Welfare of Dogs (Scotland) Bill (SP Bill 32) as introduced in the Scottish Parliament on 20 June 2023

Welfare of Dogs (Scotland) Bill

Financial Memorandum

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