

~Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee Report~

The Government needs to carefully consider the recommendations of a new committee report on the effectiveness of dog attack legislation to ensure that the public are provided with the best possible protection from the risk of such incidents, according to a specialist lawyer.

Produced by the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee, the Dog Control and Welfare report stated that current plans on the issue are “woefully inadequate” and changes need to be “urgently” considered to ensure a clear plan is in place to deal with irresponsible owners.

The committee endorsed proposals for compulsory micro chipping which were announced last week, but added that more details need to be published on their introduction as soon as possible. It also suggested new measures including the introduction of Dog Control Notices, similar to those in use in Scotland, which provide police and local authorities with a set of powers to tackle aspects of dog-related crime and anti-social behavior.

Mathew Parker, a senior associate of Bond & Reed Associates who specialises in helping victims seriously injured in dog attacks to get justice for the problems they have endured, said: “Barely a week goes by without mention of such attacks appearing in the news and it has been clear for some time that definitive action needed to be taken to provide better protection to the public.

“The measures announced last week were a step forward but we have had long-held concerns that these do not go far enough. Our particular concern is that the introduction of compulsory insurance has never seemingly been considered. “This would guarantee that people who are seriously injured in attacks would be able to gain justice and vital funds for rehabilitation following such an incident.

“We would urge the Government to listen carefully to these concerns and ensure that it is able to put a system in place which not only reduces attacks, but also guarantees that those injured in such incidents can get the support they need and owners of dangerous dogs are properly held to account.”

Barrister Mathew Parker