

**From the Office of the
Minister of Agriculture,
Environment and Rural Affairs**

Barry Flynn
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Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**

An Roinn

**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

Depairtment o'

**Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers**

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Date: 10 September 2026

Dear Barry

Consultation on Animal Welfare - Policy Reforms in Northern Ireland

Thank you for your letter of 4 August requesting a meeting with councillors to discuss a range of wider concerns in respect of animal welfare issues in the city.

I have met with representatives from the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) in recent months to discuss similar matters and remain willing to meet NILGA again, which I consider to be the best way forward in terms of local government engagement. This would also provide an opportunity to discuss the consultation response to my Animal Welfare Pathway, or any other related matters, with representatives from all local councils under which responsibility for non-farmed animal welfare rests.

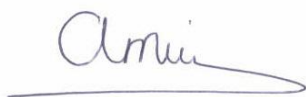
My Department remains committed to working in partnership with councils to take forward new reforms to strengthen animal welfare. Neither I nor my Department can develop legislation in isolation, which is why my officials have also asked the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) to nominate key staff from councils to join a working group which will, in the first instance, work to plan for implementation of Lucy's Law in Northern Ireland. It is anticipated that this approach will also provide a template for future reforms in this area. This ongoing engagement will provide space for discussion on how improvements to animal welfare can be implemented, but also to address and resolve the concerns or challenges councils may have about the reforms contained in my Pathway.

I want to thank Belfast City Council for its consultation response, which is being considered alongside responses from other councils, organisations and individuals. A consultation response and way forward document will be published in due course.

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contact the Department via the Next Generation Text
Relay Service by dialling 18001 + telephone number.

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Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A. Muir', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

ANDREW MUIR MLA
Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

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