

Rural Affairs and Islands Committee
Wednesday 5 November 2025
30th Meeting, 2025 (Session 6)

Greyhound Racing (Offences) (Scotland) Bill

Introduction

1. The [Greyhound Racing \(Offences\) \(Scotland\) Bill](#) was introduced in the Scottish Parliament on 23 April 2025. It is a Member's Bill and was introduced by Mark Ruskell MSP (the Member in Charge of the Bill).
2. This paper supports the Committee's evidence session with the Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity and Scottish Government officials.

Background to the Bill

3. The Bill and supporting documents were prepared by the Scottish Parliament's Non-Government Bills Unit (NGBU) on behalf of the Member in Charge of the Bill.
4. The policy memorandum sets out the Bill's aims to improve and protect the welfare of greyhounds in Scotland, as Mark Ruskell MSP "considers that there is an inherent, evidence-based, risk of injury or fatality of greyhounds involved in racing" and that "existing animal welfare measures have not sufficiently protected racing greyhounds from harm".
5. The Bill seeks to ban greyhound racing in Scotland by making it an offence for:
 - A person who owns or is responsible for a greyhound, to "knowingly cause" that greyhound to run on a racetrack or "knowingly permit" another person to do so and
 - A person who owns or is responsible for the operation of a racetrack, to "knowingly cause or permit" another person to cause a greyhound to run on that racetrack.
6. SPICe has [published a briefing 'Greyhound Racing \(Offences\) \(Scotland\) Bill' which provides further information about the Bill](#).

Petition PE1758: End greyhound racing in Scotland

7. On 23 October 2019, a [Petition PE1758: End greyhound racing in Scotland](#) was lodged by Gill Docherty on behalf of Scotland Against Greyhound Exploitation. The petition "calls on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to put an end to greyhound racing in Scotland".
8. The petition was referred to the RAI Committee by the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee at the end of session 5. The RAI Committee decided to undertake an inquiry on the issue, taking a 'whole-life

approach' which considered the welfare of greyhounds bred for racing across their life, from breeding and early life, through their racing years and into retirement.

9. Ahead of the introduction of the Member's Bill, as the likely lead committee for the Bill, the Committee agreed that it would be inappropriate to take a view on the petition. However, Members agreed to publish an interim report to set out the evidence taken over the course of the Committee's inquiry on the petition.
10. The RAI Committee [published its interim report on the petition on 27th November 2024](#). The report set out the evidence taken over the course of the Committee's inquiry and the Committee's conclusions and recommendations relating to the other aspects of the petition inquiry which the Committee did not anticipate would be part of the proposed Bill.
11. Members agreed to keep the petition open and refer back to issues raised in the inquiry when the Committee undertakes its stage 1 scrutiny.

RAI Committee scrutiny of the Bill

12. The Committee [sent a targeted call for views to those organisations who had responded to the member's consultation on the draft Bill proposal and has published the responses](#). SPICe has [prepared a summary of the call for views](#).
13. The [Scottish Government set out its position on the Bill in a letter from the Minister](#).
14. At its meeting on 5 November, the Committee will take evidence from the Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity and Scottish Government officials on the Bill. The Committee will then take evidence from the Member in Charge of the Bill and the NGBU on 12 November.

Clerks to the Committee
October 2025