

BULLY DOGS

I was heavily involved in discussions surrounding the original Dangerous Dogs legislation having worked with lawyers to seek protection for Dempsey and other `Pit Bull Type` terriers.

The issue of XL Bully dogs is complex. First, there is no clear definition of what constitutes an `XL Bully Dog` which is not a breed in its own right. Second there is the adage that `there are no bad dogs – only bad owners` which as a generality is true.

The sad fact is that `XL` dogs are too frequently acquired by young men who do not know how to handle and /or mistreat them and that can lead to animals that are out of control and potentially vicious.

The government clearly has a duty to try to prevent further horrific attacks and deaths of the kind that have been witnessed recently. There is no easy solution but I have come to the conclusion that, while not in favour of yet more bureaucracy, the creation of a canine register might be a better long-term answer than the proposal to `extend the Dangerous Dogs Act` (itself a deeply flawed piece of legislation) to embrace as yet undefined non-breeds that is currently under consideration. We need a considered response not a knee-jerk reaction to the problem and I have written accordingly to the Secretary of State to express my reservations about her Department's proposals.