I am pleased to inform you that a further public consultation on the introduction of compulsory microchipping of dogs in Wales has launched today.

In 2012, a consultation exercise took place on the general policy principles of microchipping all dogs in Wales. 84% of respondents were supportive of introducing compulsory microchipping for dogs. As work has progressed, specific areas of the policy have been developed with key stakeholders. I have therefore decided that a further consultation should take place. This is in order to take wider views on some of the specific elements that I am proposing to include in the Regulations. These include enforcement, the matter of who actually undertakes the implantation of microchips, and how and what information is recorded.

The consultation will last for a period of eight weeks, closing on 10th May 2015.

Following the consultation process and the drafting of the proposed Regulations, the Welsh Ministers will advise Member States via the European Commission about the Regulations. A standstill period of three months from the date of notification to the Commission will have to then be observed before the draft Regulations can be laid before the National Assembly for Wales.

As set out in my Written Statement of 16 February 2015, we are working to bring in compulsory microchipping for all dogs in Wales in the spring of 2016. This is in line with the date announced for compulsory microchipping in England and, more recently announced, in Scotland.