

CYNGOR SIR CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

Report to: Council

Date of meeting: December 2023

Title: A proposal to ban the giving of live animals as prizes on Ceredigion County Council property

Purpose of the report: To implement a ban on the giving of live animals as prizes on Ceredigion County Council property.

For: Decision

Cabinet Portfolio and Cabinet Member:
Cllr. Matthew Vaux responsible for Public Protection

BACKGROUND:

Within Ceredigion County Council, the protection and endorsement of high standards of animal welfare is upmost as part of supporting the farming industry, and to support those who enjoy keeping animals as pets. The Authority is aware of the Royal Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animal (RSPCA) campaign on “giving pets as prizes” leading to a proposal to implement a ban on giving live animals on Ceredigion County Council property.

This report provides the context on the proposed ban of the giving live animals (e.g. Goldfish, etc) as prizes as set out in the RSPCA campaign. The campaign is also supported by Welsh Government

While a range of animals are given as prizes each year in Wales and the rest of the UK, goldfish is the animal most associated with pets as prizes. Goldfish are easily stressed and very often fish that are won as prizes suffer miserably from shock, oxygen starvation or die from changes in water temperature, and many will die before their new owners can get them home.

Acquiring an animal to be kept as a pet should be the result of careful planning and prior consideration. The prospective owner should have a clear understanding of the responsibilities involved and carefully consider whether they have, and will continue to have, the facilities, time, financial means and level of interest necessary to ensure a satisfactory standard of care for their animal prior to acquiring it.

Since the start of the RSPCA campaign, 13 Welsh authorities have supported the RSPCA campaign, namely:-

- Bridgend
- Caerphilly
- Cardiff
- Conwy
- Flintshire
- Neath Port Talbot
- Newport
- Pembrokeshire

- Rhondda Cynon Taf
- Torfaen County Borough
- Vale of Glamorgan
- Wrexham
- Merthyr Tyfil

The Animal Welfare Act 2006 (applicable in both England and Wales), does not forbid giving live animals as prizes unless they are given to unaccompanied children. The Act makes it an offence, in England and Wales, to give away live animals as prizes if the person can reasonably be believed to be under 16 years of age and is not accompanied by an adult.

However, there are some exceptions in section 11 (3)-(6) of the Act. It is a different matter in Scotland, where it is an offence, under the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006, to offer or give an animal to another person as a prize (whatever their age), except where it is offered in a family context.

The RSPCA believes that this legislation does not go far enough and does not cover the animal welfare issues associated with this practice and therefore, they would like to see similar legislation to the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006 introduced in England and Wales; to make it an offence to give an animal as a prize, regardless of age, except within the family context.

Ceredigion County Council has an opportunity to ban “pets as prizes” on Council property, thereby serving to raise public awareness of animal welfare surrounding the giving of live animals as prizes. In line with its powers, the Council can introduce a ban through changing its terms and conditions of the agreements to use Council property. This report is supported by the Corporate Lead Officer for Economy and Regeneration who oversees management of Council land and facilities.

CURRENT SITUATION:

To our knowledge no event held on Council land currently offers Pets as Prizes. There are autumn fairs held in Cardigan, Aberaeron and Aberystwyth, however it is understood that goldfish are not given as prizes by this operator.

Wellbeing of Future Generations:

Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed? Yes

If, not, please state why.

Summary of Integrated Impact Assessment:

- Long term:** The Council is committed to championing high standards of animal welfare
- Integration:** Ensuring broader controls on animal welfare is in line with objectives contained within the Well-being of Future Generation (Wales) Act 2015

- Collaboration:** The Council works closely with other statutory agencies such as the Welsh Government, Animal and Plant Health Agency in ensuring animal welfare standards are maintained. The Council also works with the RSPCA to further our shared aims and objectives.
- Involvement:** The recommendation is consistent with the actions of other authorities who have implemented the same, and is in line with public expectations of protecting animal welfare.
- Prevention:** The activity of banning the giving of pets as prizes prevents the potential for adverse animal welfare.

Recommendation(s):

That Council implements an outright ban on the giving of live animals as prizes, in any form, on Council land.

Reasons for decision:

To maintain high levels of animal welfare throughout Ceredigion County Council through implementing a ban on the practice of giving live animals as prizes on Council land due to the potential distress caused to the animals.

Overview and Scrutiny:

Members of the Healthier Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the report on the 22nd November 2023 and are submitting supportive feedback to the Council.

Policy Framework:

Animal welfare

Corporate Well-being Objectives:

Creating caring and healthy communities

Finance and Procurement implications:

None

Legal Implications:

None

Staffing implications:

None

Property / asset implications:

Ceredigion Council asset managers will be briefed on the ban to ensure the decision is implemented.

Risk(s):

None

Statutory Powers:

None

Background Papers:

- Letter from Lesley Griffiths, AS/MS Minister from Rural Affairs and North Wales

Appendices:

None

Corporate Lead Officer:

Alun Williams, Policy Performance and Public Protection

Reporting Officer:

Heddwyn Evans, Environmental Health Manager

Date:

24th November 2023