

## **Bath and North East Somerset Council**

### **Full Council meeting - Thursday 21st August**

#### **Conservative Group Motion on Animal Welfare**

##### **To be proposed by Councillor Alan Hale**

###### Council:

1. Is concerned about the number of cases reported to the RSPCA each year, regarding pets given as prizes via fairgrounds, social media, and other channels.
2. Is concerned for the welfare of those animals that are being given as prizes.
3. Recognises that many cases of pets being as prizes may go unreported each year.
4. Supports a move to ban the giving of live animals as prizes, in any form, within Bath & North-East Somerset whatever the event might be.

###### Council therefore:

5. Requests that an outright ban on the giving of live animals as prizes, in any form, on Bath and North-East Somerset land be implemented.
6. Recommends that the UK Government be written to, urging an outright ban on the giving of live animals as prizes on both public and private land.

###### *Context:*

- *Animal ownership is a big responsibility, one that should be planned and well thought out. Animals often don't have their welfare needs met both prior to, during and after being given as a prize.*
- *Between 2015 and 2020, there were 120 cases reported to the RSPCA of live animals being given as prizes in England. The numbers decreased during lockdowns, but we still regularly receive calls about pets being given away as prizes.*
- *Under the Animal Welfare Act 2006, it is an offence to give an animal as a prize to anyone under the age of 16, except within the family context. The*
- *Unless where specifically set out in the statute, motions approved at Council do not bind the Executive (Cabinet) but may influence their future decisions.*
- *Councillors are reminded of their public sector equality duty which requires the Council to consider or think about how their policies or decisions may affect people who are protected under the Equality Act.*

*RSPCA believes that this does not go far enough, and would like to see legislation introduced similar to that within the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006, which states that it is an offence to give an animal as a prize, regardless of age, except within the family context.*

- *Local authorities have the opportunity to ban the giving of live animals as prizes on Council owned land, ensuring the welfare of these animals is not compromised, as well as raising public awareness of the issue and leading the way on ending this outdated practice.*

*The current legislative position, The Animal Welfare Act, was introduced in England and Wales in 2006, in a bid to improve animal welfare across the two countries. While this legislation remains one of the most important pieces of legislation ever introduced for animals, it could go further in protecting the welfare of pets currently issued as prizes. Under Section 11 of the Act - Transfer of animals by way of sale or prize to persons under 16 - it is an offence to give an animal as a prize to anyone under the age of 16, unless they are accompanied by someone over the age of 16 or it is within the family context. The RSPCA believes that this piece of legislation could go further to help ensure the welfare of animals currently issued as prizes. Animals are being kept and transported in conditions which do not meet their needs, often resulting in their death before the new owners even get them home. As such, The RSPCA advocates a move similar to the Scottish legislation, set out under Section 31 of the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006, which states that is an offence for an animal to be given as a prize regardless of age, except where given within the family context. Despite the current law, many are also being given to individuals aged under 16 - potentially highlighting issues around enforcement of the existing provision, and the need to rethink.*

*The need for voluntary bans; ultimately, the RSPCA believes that the introduction of a Scottish-like outright ban on animals as prizes on both public and private land by the UK Government is the most effective means to prevent animals being given thoughtlessly as prizes and therefore ensuring the welfare of these animals. However, in implementing a ban on Council-owned land, local authorities could deliver a powerful message to the local community, the Government and their counterparts elsewhere on the importance of this issue. Councils, as such, not only have the opportunity to ban the giving of live animals as prizes on their land, but also - in the process - to raise wider public awareness as to the impact that this practice has on the welfare of the animals. It is the view of the RSPCA that the more Local Authorities make this step, the greater the possibility of us achieving an outright ban on this outdated practice; while also dramatically restricting areas across the country where pets can be given as prizes.*

**ENDS.**

- *Unless where specifically set out in the statute, motions approved at Council do not bind the Executive (Cabinet) but may influence their future decisions.*
- *Councillors are reminded of their public sector equality duty which requires the Council to consider or think about how their policies or decisions may affect people who are protected under the Equality Act.*