

Meeting of:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	Monday, 27 September 2021
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Healthy Living and Social Care
Report Title:	Animals as prizes and the release of Balloons on Vale of Glamorgan Council land
Purpose of Report:	To seek to implement a ban on the giving of live animals as prizes and the release of balloons on all Vale of Glamorgan Council land
Report Owner:	Report of the Cabinet Member for Legal, Regulatory and Planning Services
Responsible Officer:	Miles Punter - Director of Environment and Housing
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	<p>Accountant Environment and Housing</p> <p>Legal - Committee Reports</p> <p>Operational Manager - Accountancy</p> <p>Operational Manager, Property</p> <p>Head of Shared Regulatory Services</p> <p>Head of Neighbourhood Services</p> <p>Director of Learning and Skills</p> <p>Director of Social Services</p> <p>Events Officer</p> <p>Head of Regeneration and Planning</p>
Policy Framework:	This report is a matter for decision by Cabinet.

Executive summary

- The Council has been contacted by the RSPCA in relation to implementing a ban on the giving of live animals as prizes on Council owned land.
- The RSPCA has provided a list of reasons why the giving of such prizes causes them concern including animal welfare, release of unwanted prizes into the environment and the practices surrounding such prizes.
- As well as considering a ban on live animals the opportunity also arises, with reference to the recently declared 'Nature Emergency' to look at other practices that are potentially damaging to the environment and have occurred on Council land in the past such as the release of Balloons.
- The Council banned the release of Chinese Lanterns on its land in 2015.
- It is therefore recommended to ban the release of Balloons.
- In addition, it is also proposed to write to the Welsh Government to seek a national ban on all public and Private Land for the giving of live animals as prizes and the release of Chinese Lanterns and Balloons.

Recommendations

1. That an outright ban on the giving of live animals as prizes, in any form, on Vale of Glamorgan Council land is implemented.
2. That the release of balloons be banned on all Vale of Glamorgan Council land.
3. That the Council write to the Welsh Government requesting an outright ban on the giving of live animals as prizes, and the release of Chinese Lanterns and Balloons on both public and private land in Wales.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. To prevent the giving of live animals as prizes on Council land due to the distress caused to animals by such prizes.
2. To prevent balloons being released from Council that can cause harm to wildlife/livestock.
3. To urge the Welsh Government to implement a wider ban on the giving of live animals as prizes and the release of Chinese Lanterns and Balloons for the reasons detailed in the report.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Council has been contacted by the RSPCA in relation to implementing a ban on the giving of live animals as prizes at certain events such as fairgrounds. In addition, the Council is also aware of potentially dangerous issues arising from the release of Chinese lanterns and balloons.
- 1.2 The Council does have the ability to ban such activities on its own land but cannot implement a wider ban on private land in the Vale of Glamorgan.
- 1.3 The Council has previously banned the launch of Chinese Lanterns from its land (min C2614 – 26th January 2015)

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1 The RSPCA has made the following comments in asking the Vale of Glamorgan Council to implement a ban on the giving of live animals as prizes:
 - Animal ownership is a big responsibility, one that should be planned and well thought out. Animals often do not have their welfare needs met both prior to, during and after being given as a prize.
 - Between 2014 and 2020, there were 48 cases reported to the RSPCA of live animals being given as prizes in Wales. While a large number of these were goldfish being given at fairgrounds, other animals including dogs, ducklings and horses were also reported during this period.

- 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. RSPCA Cymru 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.
 - Wales' 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.
- 2.2** By adopting a ban, the Council would be following the likes of Caerphilly, Conwy, Newport and Wrexham, who have already banned the giving of live animals as prizes on their land. It is the view of the RSPCA that the more Local Authorities that make this step, the greater the possibility of achieving an outright ban on this outdated practice, while also dramatically restricting areas across the country where pets can be given as prizes.
- 2.3** In addition to banning the giving of live animals as prizes the opportunity also arises to consider a ban on balloons being released from Council land following the previous ban on Chinese Lanterns. Both of these items have been known to cause issues with the natural environment, livestock and wildlife.
- 2.4** The proposals for these bans would also support the Council's recently declared 'Nature Emergency' by preventing the opportunity for further damage to the environment by the release of Lanterns or Balloons or introducing goldfish etc. into our ecosystems.

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

- 3.1** The recommendations contained within this report are clearly focused on protecting the environment for future generations.
- 3.2** The Well-being of Future Generations Act requires the Council to underpin decision making by contributing to the seven well-being goals of the Act, following the five ways of working, and consequently undertaking actions that will have a positive impact on people living in the future as well as those living today. The banning of live animals as prizes and stopping the release of Chinese Lanterns and Balloons will make a clear contribute to these well-being objectives.
- 3.3** The recommendations contained within the report are also complimentary to the Council's Corporate plan environmental objectives.

4. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

4.1 There are no direct financial implications associated with this report.

Employment

4.2 There are no direct employment implications associated with this report

Legal (Including Equalities)

4.3 The Council has the legal right to ban these activities on its own land.

4.4 All Council departments will be asked to include reference to the ban on the release of balloons and Chinese lanterns, and the giving of live animals as prizes in future terms and conditions for the use of Council owned facilities. These exclusions will also be added to the present filming terms and conditions.

5. Background Papers

Information from RSPCA - June 2021.