

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 20 September 2018

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Enterprise, Community and Resources

PORTFOLIO: Physical Environment

SUBJECT: Prohibition of the Sale of Fur at Halton Markets

WARD(S) Appleton & Mersey

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to present a proposal to prohibit the sale of fur at Halton's Markets

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That Members agree to prohibit the sale of fur at Halton's markets.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 On 4th June, Parliament debated banning the importation of and sale of fur, after a petition on the topic obtained more than 100,000 signatures. The petition called for a ban on selling fur in the UK stating, "Fur farming was banned in England and Wales in 2000 followed by Scotland in 2002. However, fur products can still be legally imported from other countries and sold here in the UK. Much of the fur comes from countries that have very weak or no animal welfare laws at all".

3.2 The motion received strong cross-party support. The next probable stage would be for Members of Parliament to encourage the Secretary of State at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to bring forward a Bill for consideration. No timetable has been set for progressing this.

3.3 Local Authorities have received a number of enquiries and Freedom of Information requests from Animal Rights Campaigners regarding policies in respect of the sale of fur items on Council-run markets.

One organisation which has been actively lobbying for the ban has been People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA). Further details are contained via the link <https://www.peta.org/>. The counter arguments are presented by an organisation called "Truth About Fur. Further details are outlined in the link. <http://www.truthaboutfur.com/en/ethics-of-fur>

3.4 The National Association of British Market Authorities has not

confirmed its position on this, and it appears that the decision whether or not to prohibit the sale of fur is left to individual Local Authorities.

- 3.5 Regarding Halton's markets, there is only one outdoor trader who sells fur products, usually on a Wednesday and a Saturday.
- 3.6 Therefore, overall, the impact of any ban would not have a huge impact on the market as a whole but obviously, the prohibition of the sale of fur products will have an impact on this business.
- 3.7 It would seem that given the number of signatures petitioning for a prohibition, together with cross-party support for the motion outlined above, Members may consider that now is an appropriate time to prohibit the sale of fur at Halton's markets.
- 3.8 Animal Rights supporters argue that the production of clothing made from fur results in considerable suffering to animals. Obviously, by introducing the policy, Halton Borough Council would be confirming that it does not support the use of obtaining animal fur for clothing.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 This subject generally falls outside of the legislation enforced by the Council's Trading Standards team. Regulating the importation of various controlled furs and animal skins falls under the UKBA.
- 4.2 From a trading standards perspective, the involvement would be to enforce the prohibition on supplying products specifically containing cat and dog fur. Enforcement is shared with Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs department and is dependent on the circumstances.
- 4.3 However, Trading Standards has a responsibility from a textile labelling point of view as fur should be labelled as containing parts of animal origin. Similarly if real fur was mis-described as fake or vice versa then there may also be offences that would need to be investigated or enforced.
- 4.4 In summary, provided that the fur is not from a banned source and is correctly labelled there does not seem to be anything within legislation to prohibit its sale.

Members are advised for information that in the past some of the Mayoral Regalia contained fur, but faux fur has replaced this as follows:

In use

Mayor's Lightweight Robe – Made in 1995 – Presented to the Council by Halton College Students – Velvet trim

Mayor's Heavy Robe – Made in 2002 – Velvet trim
Deputy Mayor's Robe - Made in 1958 – Velvet trim

5.0 OTHER/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children & Young People in Halton

6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

6.3 A Healthy Halton

6.4 A Safer Halton

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 The main risk arising from the agreement to accept the recommendation presented in the report is the fact that the issue is still going through parliamentary debate and is not enforceable as "law" given that the motion debate described above has not been embodied in any legislation.

The Council can apply a policy prohibiting the sale of any "fur" based on cruelty to animals and ethical reasons.

The Council would need to demonstrate that it is behaving reasonably when preventing a trader from selling his products.

There is the potential that the trader may pursue a compensation claim in relation to any loss of trade. One way of mitigating this risk would be to provide market traders with advanced notice that the Council intends to introduce this change. In addition, the trader could be supported in changing his commodity list with a rental reduction.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

There are no issues arising from this report.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

9.1 There are no background papers under meaning of the Act.