

Mike Hedges AM
Chair of Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee

14 October 2019

Dear Mike,

Financial implications of the Wild Animals and Circuses (Wales) Bill

The Finance Committee considered the financial implications of the Wild Animals and Circuses (Wales) Bill (the Bill) on 3 October 2019 and took evidence from the Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs (the Minister).

Given that the financial implications of the Bill are relatively small, the Finance Committee felt it would be more appropriate to write to you as Chair of the lead Committee responsible for scrutinising the Bill to share our considerations and recommendations.

Evidence and Committee view

The estimated financial costs and benefits of the Bill are set out in the Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) as part of the Explanatory Memorandum.¹

Whilst there are no travelling circuses with wild animals based in Wales, they do visit and therefore the RIA states "there will be a small implementation cost to the Welsh Government" estimated at £6,000. This includes preparing bilingual guidance, engaging with stakeholders and communicating to affected businesses.

As a result of the Bill, the RIA expects Welsh Government responding to correspondence on the use of wild animals in circuses to "reduce significantly" with an estimated cost saving of £9,500 over five years. Thus giving a potential overall net cost saving of £3,500 by 2025.

The Minister said that, having consulted with a range of stakeholders and considered the published data from Scotland (where the ban was introduced in May 2018) and England (where the ban will

¹ Wild Animals and Circuses (Wales) Bill, Explanatory Memorandum incorporating the Regulatory Impact Assessment and Explanatory Notes, July 2019



come into force in January 2020), the Welsh Government was confident that the estimated costs and benefits were “accurate to the best of our ability”.²

With regards to the potential impact on local authorities and circuses, the Minister said there was a “high degree of uncertainty” and that the financial costs were “unknown”.³

During an evidence session of your Committee on 2 October 2019, witnesses from the travelling circus community acknowledged the Bill was likely to have financial implications for them but they were unable to quantify what the costs might be. Thomas Chipperfield, an animal trainer said:

“the opportunity for economic growth, in terms of my business, would be reduced drastically, because of the consistent nature of circus work, as opposed to the contractual basis that other activities operate on. That, I think, is the fundamental difference, so that the lack of opportunity to engage in regular work in that way would have a significantly negative impact on my business in that fashion.”⁴

The RIA states that “enforcement of the Bill would not constitute additional costs for Local Authorities as it could be conducted alongside existing enforcement activities”.

On this issue, the Minister said there would be “minimal impact” on local authorities given that they would not be expected to conduct any additional inspections as a result of the Bill.

Conclusion

The Finance Committee is satisfied that the financial costs and benefits as set out in the Regulatory Impact Assessment are reasonable and appropriate. However, the Committee is mindful of the unquantified costs for local authorities and circuses that have not been identified. The Committee would have expected a best estimate to be included in the Regulatory Impact Assessment.

I would be grateful if you could include the Finance Committee’s view as part of your Stage 1 report on the Bill.

Yours sincerely,

² Finance Committee, Record of Proceedings, 3 October 2019, paragraph 13

³ Finance Committee, Record of Proceedings, 3 October 2019, paragraph 13

⁴ Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee, Record of proceedings, 2 October 2019, paragraph 348



A handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored background. The signature is stylized and appears to read 'Llyr'.

Llyr Gruffydd AM, Chair of the Finance Committee

