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14th June 2016
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Appendix 4.



WLGA • CLILC

Dr James Davies MP
House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

Dear Dr Davies

Seagull control

Thank-you for your letter of 19th May to Steve Thomas which he passed to me for a response. I apologise for the delay in replying but we have been gathering some feedback on the subject from local authorities, as follows:

Pest Control measures

As you suggest in your letter to Graham Boase, a range of possible pest control options exists, including pest proofing premises, the use of birds of prey and treating or removing gull eggs. A concern expressed by many authorities is that obtaining the necessary licence to control seagulls can be prohibitive, and that the pest control solutions available appear to have limited effect. Most have therefore chosen not to pursue this route.

Cardiff Council is the only authority that reports offering a seagull control service, which replaces eggs with dummy eggs and is regarded as very successful, as well as offering advice to landowners where seagulls are nesting. Cardiff are, however, unique in Wales in having a large commercial pest control operation, and enough businesses that are willing to pay for this service to make it commercially worthwhile.

Reducing food availability

Food Waste - Many local authorities now collect food waste in closed containers, thereby reducing food availability for Seagulls, although it is recognised that this can increase seagull aggression in the short-term as seagulls compete for a decreasing food supply.

Some landfill sites use birds of prey to reduce seagull feeding, but this cannot be used at all times, and seagulls can travel long distances to other landfill sites or food supplies

Education – educating the public not to feed seagulls has been undertaken by one Welsh authority and, although it is recognised that

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this is not the main source of food for seagulls, could help to reduce "attacks" by seagulls looking for food in tourist areas.

Legislation on bird feeding / littering

Byelaws – the possibility of introducing byelaws has been mooted. However, experience has shown that the legal processes required can be complex and no Welsh authority has therefore moved forward with this option

Public Space Protection Orders – this is an option that some Welsh LAs appear willing to consider where bird feeding, for example, is creating a specific problem. However, no Welsh Authority has done so to date.

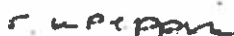
There are two main issues when considering legislative action to prevent bird feeding, which are

- Resources – if legal powers are adopted, whether via byelaws or PSPOs, there must be clear evidence of their necessity and there is then an expectation that they will be enforced. For most Welsh Authorities, this would create significant resource issues
- Religious – some religions specifically encourage kindness to animals, and there are media reports that this has been used as a justification for bird feeding in some enforcement cases.

The overarching view was that seagull control is difficult and is non-statutory, and Welsh Authorities would only look to become involved if there was a significant problem.

I hope these comments are of some assistance to you.

Yours sincerely



Tim Peppin
Director of Regeneration and Sustainable Development