

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

Motion 2

Pet Food Banks

Councillor J Carr (31 August 2023)

“1. That this Council notes that:

- a) the cost-of-living crisis continues to impact residents across Milton Keynes;
- b) the City Council’s £3.3million Winter Plan which included £100,000 to local food charities;
- c) in July 2023, MK Food Bank revealed that 1 in 25 households across the city cannot afford to buy enough food, and every week about 50 people are contacting them for the very first time, and for those who care for much-loved family pets the crisis is also affecting their ability to care and look after their animals;
- d) research from the RSPCA shows that 7 in 10 pet owners are worried about the cost of caring for their animals and a fifth are concerned about how they’ll feed them;
- e) the People’s Dispensary for Sick Animals (PDSA) revealed that 770,000 owners are going without necessities, including skipping meals to keep money aside to afford the costs associated with looking after their pets, and around 140,000 pets have been given up for rehoming due to the cost of looking after them;
- f) despite the hard work of MK Food Bank who currently collect pet food which is distributed to local animal charities, animal abandonments have increased by a quarter this year alone, whilst reports of animal neglect have increased by 13%;
- g) an estimated 2.7 million animals enter UK animal shelters each year, whilst rehoming rates are falling with animals finding new homes falling by 8%; and
- h) most animal shelters do not have the funding to help all animals that come into their care.

2. That this Council believes that:

- a) for many, owning pets is a lifeline during the cost-of-living crisis;
- b) pets help reduce their owner’s isolation and combat loneliness, providing companionship and health / mental health benefits (stroking pets helps to reduce blood pressure and can make their owners more active);
- c) facing the toughest financial crisis in a generation, many residents have been forced out of their homes and as a result have had to give up their much-loved family pet, which causes emotional distress and a damaging effect on mental health;

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- d) no one should have to choose between feeding themselves or feeding their pets; and
 - e) supporting residents by ensuring they have access to food for their pets will reduce the pressure on already stretched shelters and ensure pets can stay with their owners.
3. That this Council resolves to encourage food organisations such as MK Food Bank and SOFEA to work with animal charities to source pet food and provide it at human food banks as well as community larders to help struggling pet owners to feed their animals.”