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## **The Welsh Government’s Legislative Consent Memorandum on the Animal Welfare (Import of Dogs, Cats and Ferrets) Bill**

### **Welsh Government response to the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee’s report**

**August 2025**

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In July 2025 the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee submitted its report on the Animal Welfare (Import of Dogs, Cats and Ferrets) Bill. The report includes two conclusions and four recommendations. This is the Welsh Government response to that report.

### **Introduction**

The Animal Welfare (Import of Dogs, Cats and Ferrets) Bill (“the Bill”) was introduced in the House of Commons on 16 October 2024. The Bill is a Private Members’ Bill, introduced by Dr Danny Chambers MP and is supported by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. The Bill makes provision to restrict the commercial importation and non-commercial movement of dogs, cats and ferrets into the United Kingdom from third countries on animal welfare grounds. The Bill completed its passage through the House of Commons on 4 July 2025 and received its First Reading in the House of Lords on 7 July.

Legislative consent is required as the Bill makes provision with regard to devolved matters in so far as it applies to Wales, notably, animal welfare. A Legislative Consent Memorandum (LCM) was laid before the Senedd on 21 May 2025. On 7 July 2025, the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee (LJCC) agreed its report on the LCM. The Report contained two conclusions and four recommendations.

With thanks to the members of the LJCC for their report on the Bill, I have set out my response to the Report’s individual conclusions and recommendations below.

### **Responses to recommendations**

#### **Conclusion 1**

The Committee concludes:

“We agree with the Welsh Government’s assessment, as set out in the Memorandum, of the provisions within the Bill which require the consent of the Senedd in accordance with Standing Order 29; but this is subject to our views set out in conclusion 2.”

Response: The Welsh Government notes this conclusion.

## **Conclusion 2**

The Committee concludes:

“We believe that clause 8(3) of the Bill as introduced contains provision which requires the consent of the Senedd in accordance with Standing Order 29.”

Response: The Welsh Government acknowledges this conclusion and by way of response directs the LJCC to the related responses to recommendations 1 and 3 below.

## **Recommendation 1**

The Committee recommends:

“The Cabinet Secretary should explain why the Welsh Government believes that clause 8(3) of the Bill, which relates to the commencement of the Bill’s other provisions which require consent, amounts to non-operative provision which does not require the consent of the Senedd.”

Response: Agree

Upon further consideration and analysis, we have laid a supplementary Legislative Consent Memorandum in relation to clause 8(3) of the Bill in so far as it has regard to devolved matters.

Financial Implications: None.

## **Recommendation 2**

The Committee recommends:

“The Cabinet Secretary should explain why, in accordance with the Welsh Government’s principles on UK legislation in devolved areas, the creation of a concurrent power in this Bill represents an exceptional case for which the Welsh Ministers are content with its inclusion, and for which the Senedd should provide its consent.”

Response: Agree.

The inclusion of a concurrent power in this Bill is appropriate and exceptional due to the operational and practical benefits of a GB-wide approach, including a uniformed approach to export and import controls at borders.

A fragmented approach could create unnecessary complexity for animal keepers, transporters, and enforcement agencies, particularly where cross-border movement is involved. A GB-wide approach best ensures cross-border consistency, aids effective enforcement, prevents loopholes, provides legal clarity and avoids confusion.

Animal health and welfare powers are devolved to Wales. However, in certain circumstances there are benefits in working collaboratively with the UK Government. I am content with the inclusion of this power as it enables coordinated implementation and retains the ability to act independently where needed. The Secretary of State must obtain the consent of the Welsh Ministers before making relevant regulations under the Bill which could be made by Welsh Ministers.

Financial Implications: None.

### **Recommendation 3**

The Committee recommends:

“The Cabinet Secretary should set out the Welsh Government’s position in respect of the commencement power in the Bill, making specific regard to the absence of a requirement for the UK Government to seek the consent of the Welsh Ministers before commencing the Bill’s provisions.”

Response: Agree.

My officials have worked closely with their DEFRA counterparts on the development of the Bill. They will continue to work closely with DEFRA with regard to commencement of provisions and wider implementation of the Bill.

This is now the third time seeking to pass this Bill, which first formed part of the Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill and secondly appeared as a Private Members’ Bill under the last UK (Conservative) Government.

Whilst I recognise a consent mechanism for the Welsh Ministers would be preferable, I have committed to not seeking any amendments to this Bill to secure its passage through Parliament. My priority is to see this important Bill finally realised.

Financial Implications: None.

### **Recommendation 4**

The Committee recommends:

“The Cabinet Secretary should set out the Senedd procedure or procedures to which regulations made by the Welsh Ministers under clause 1 are to be subject.”

Response: Agree.

The procedure for making regulations under clause 1 of the Bill is provided for in clause 4, namely subsections (3) and (4). Regulations made by the Welsh Ministers under clause 1 will be subject to the Senedd’s affirmative procedure, except for where they only contain provision on fees in relation to permit applications, where they will be subject to the Senedd’s negative procedure.

Financial Implications: None.