

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET

3 MARCH 2015

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR RESOURCES

USE OF SKY LANTERNS AND BALLOONS ON COUNCIL LAND

1. Purpose of Report

This report presents proposals for prohibition of the release of sky lanterns and balloons from council owned land and property.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives / Other Corporate Priorities

This report supports one of the key outcomes from the Corporate Plan 2013 -2017, Bridgend County Borough Council is a great place to live, work and visit. This would mean that people take pride in the county, their communities, the heritage and natural environment and our communities are clean and safe and have a good range of leisure, tourism and cultural activities.

3. Background.

There is increasing concern, from a wide range of stakeholders about the possible impacts of sky lanterns and balloons on livestock and the environment. Particular concerns include the risks to animal welfare through ingestion of debris, litter in the countryside, the sea and on the coastline, risks to aviation and impacts on coastal rescue services. Since sky lanterns contain a naked flame, there are additional concerns about the fire risk to buildings, property and crops from uncontrolled landing. The Chief Fire Officers Association, National Farmers Union, Marine Conservation Society and RSPCA are amongst those urging individuals to use alternatives to sky lanterns and to ask event planners and retailers to use alternatives. In addition the Marine Conservation Society, RSPCA, RSPB, Keep Britain Tidy and the National Farmers Union have for many years called for bans on mass balloon releases. There is also evidence to indicate that mass balloon releases are a risk to livestock and wildlife. Both are a contributor to the defacement of land by litter and waste.

4. Current situation / proposal.

Although not an illegal activity, in view of the risks, a number of local authorities have now banned the use of sky lanterns. Welsh Government also actively discourages their use but provides safety guidance if lanterns are to be released.

Where land is owned or controlled by the council, a ban on the release of sky lanterns and balloons is therefore supported. Where it is able to do so, the council should also promote awareness of the issues and discourage release. Each directorate should give effect to this proposal with a suitable communication plan or policy as required.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules.

The proposal will be added to Directorate policies as required.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

There are no equality implications identified.

7. Financial Implications.

There are no financial implications.

8. Recommendation.

Cabinet is recommended to agree:

To prohibit the use of sky lanterns and balloon releases on council land and property.

**Ness Young
Corporate Director
Resources Directorate**

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Background documents

None