

North Yorkshire County Council

County Council

17 February 2021

The Report of the Corporate & Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the Notice of Motion on the Banning of Sky Lanterns

1.0 Purpose of report

- 1.1 To provide County Council with a summary of the deliberations of the Corporate & Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny committee concerning the Notice of Motion on the banning of Sky Lanterns on that was referred to the committee from the meeting of the County Council on 18 November 2020.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The following Notice of Motion was discussed at the County Council meeting held on 18 November 2020:

Ban the Release of Sky Lanterns

‘That this Council resolves to ban the release of all types of sky lanterns* on property and land owned by North Yorkshire County Council. This Council resolves to ask all Parish and Town Councils within North Yorkshire to pass a similar motion, to ban the release of sky lanterns on Parish or Town Council land.

This Council resolves to engage with business communities, landowners, schools, and individuals in North Yorkshire, to encourage them to sign up to this initiative.’

*for the purposes of the Motion, a sky lantern is a small hot air balloon made of paper with an opening at the bottom, where a small fire is suspended.

Proposed by County Councillor Bryn Griffiths
Seconded by County Councillor Philip Broadbank

- 2.4 The Chairman, Cllr Jim Clark, chose to refer the matter to the Corporate and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

3.0 Corporate & Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 3.1 At a meeting of the Corporate & Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 7 December 2020 an introductory report was considered which provided:
- An overview of the concerns raised at full Council in November 2020;
 - A summary of the national position regarding the release of sky lanterns

- The damage sky lanterns can cause to the environment and the associated risk of harm to animals and sea life;
- Initial information on the issues associated with the release of Helium Balloons;
- Contributions from representatives from the Farmers Union and North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Services;

3.2 The outcome of that meeting was that the Corporate & Partnerships Overview & Scrutiny Committee agreed to revise the wording of the Notice of Motion so that it included the wording: 'on any property and land which North Yorkshire County Council own or lease or have any interest in or control over'.

3.3 The Committee also agreed to hold a further meeting to consider the inclusion of helium balloons in the proposed ban and to seek contributions from representatives of the County Council's other Overview & Scrutiny Committees.

3.4 At a meeting held on 18 January 2021, the committee received additional information on:

- The risks to wildlife and the environment caused by helium balloons
- The property and legal implications associated with the proposed ban
- the number of bans already implemented by local authorities across the country
- The national picture regarding a countrywide ban
- Issues around enforcement
- Alternatives to balloon and sky lantern releases
- The potential for a publicity campaign to raise public awareness and dissuade others from using sky lanterns and helium balloons

4.0 Conclusion

4.1 Sky lanterns and helium balloon releases pose a significant risk of harm to animals, sealife and the environment.

5.0 Recommendation

5.1 The Corporate & Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny committee recommends that the County Council adopts and promotes the following charter:

'North Yorkshire County Council has banned the release of sky lanterns and helium balloons on any property and land which North Yorkshire County Council own or lease or have any interest in or control over

We are committed to encouraging businesses, communities, landowners, schools, residential homes and individuals to switch to alternative ways of celebrating and commemorating events.

North Yorkshire County Council pledges to: -

- Promote the restriction of the release of all types of helium-filled balloon and sky lantern on property and land owned by the Council. This includes those that are made from bamboo or claim to be biodegradable.
- Ask all Parish and Town Councils within North Yorkshire to pass a similar motion, to ban the release of sky lanterns on Parish or Town Council land.
- Incorporate the ban into all future residential tenancy and land lease agreements.
- Proactively engage with businesses, landowners, schools, residential homes, council tenants, social housing providers, charities and community groups, to raise awareness of safer and more environmentally friendly alternatives that people can celebrate with, through promotion and campaigns.
- Work with the County's MPs to ensure that the issue is considered by Parliament

Barry Khan
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