

HIGH PEAK BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to The Executive

21 June 2018

TITLE:	Ban on Sky Lantern releases from Council Land
PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	Leader of the Council - Councillor Tony Ashton
CONTACT OFFICER:	Mark Trillo – Executive Director (People) and Monitoring Officer
WARDS INVOLVED:	None Specific

Appendices Attached – None

1. **Reason for the Report:** To consider the introduction of a prohibition on the release of sky lanterns from Council owned land and property to reduce the risk of harm and fire as outlined in the report.

2. **Recommendation**
 - 2.1 For the Executive to approve a ban on the sale and release of sky lanterns from Council land.

3. **Executive Summary**
 - 3.1 The use of sky lanterns is becoming more popular at weddings, festivals and events.

 - 3.2 Sky lanterns (also known as ‘Chinese lanterns’) are small hot air balloons typically around 100cm high with a diameter of approximately 60cm. They are made of paper with an opening at the bottom where a small fire is suspended. The construction may involve wire, rope and string. Some are made from biodegradable materials.

- 3.3 The increasing usage is having a harmful impact on livestock and on the environment due to litter. This is particularly impacting on the marine environment, farming industry and parks.
- 3.4 Sky lanterns pose a serious threat to wildlife and livestock through both ingestion and entrapment. In addition, un-extinguished sky lanterns are a significant fire hazard and the metal waste can damage farm machinery and harm livestock, they are also a contributor to the defacement of land by litter and waste.
- 3.5 Many national organisations already support the ban on sky lantern releases, including the RSPCA, RSPB, the National Farmers Union, the Marine Conservation Society and the Chief Fire Officers' Association.

4. How this report links to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 The report supports the corporate aim of promoting a safe, fair and secure environment for residents, businesses and visitors through a range of activities.

5. Options and Analysis

- 5.1 That the Borough Council prohibits the release of sky lanterns from all Council land (recommended).
- 5.2 That the prohibition on the use of sky lanterns would also apply to events organised by third parties which are held on Council property.
- 5.3 It is further recommended that the prohibition of sky lantern releases is incorporated into the terms and conditions of the Council's contracts, leases, licences and entertainment licences organised for events held on Council owned land and property.
- 5.4 That the ban of the release of sky lanterns is not approved (not recommended). The option of not enforcing a ban would fail to safeguard the public and livestock.

6. Implications

6.1 Community Safety - (Crime and Disorder Act 1998)

The introduction of a ban on the release of sky lanterns from Council land could assist in the reduction of anti social behaviour and damage to animals, people and property.

6.2 Workforce

None.

6.3 Equality and Diversity/Equality Impact Assessment

This report has been prepared in accordance with the Council's Diversity and Equality Policies.

6.4 Financial Considerations

The cost of introducing a ban from Council owned land, including any publicity and the introduction of a policy would all need to be considered.

6.5 Legal

The ban is not enforceable by law but can be included in Council policies and permission agreements for the use of Council land. The ban would have limited other legal implications.

6.6 Sustainability

This proposal seeks to have a positive effect on the sustainability and well-being of residents and animal welfare in High Peak.

6.7 Internal and External Consultation

None.

6.8 Risk Assessment

None.

7. **Background and Detail**

7.1 When sky lanterns (also known as Chinese lanterns) are released, they do not just disappear, they float back down to earth. There is evidence to show that the release of sky lanterns presents an avoidable fire and safety risk. There is also evidence to indicate that sky lantern releases are a risk to livestock and wildlife.

7.2 In recent years local authorities, charities and other agencies have lobbied the Government calling for the ban of sky lanterns in the UK.

7.3 The Government decided not to prohibit sky lanterns, but in August 2014 the Trading Standards Institute, following discussions between Government and industry, issued an industry code of practice to provide guidance for manufacturers, importers, distributors and retailers of sky lanterns, covering their manufacture, and warnings and instructions that must be provided.

- 7.4 Sky lanterns do present a significant fire hazard, especially where the lantern is unable to stay upright in the air due to obstacles or the wind; the paper may ignite and become a fire hazard. The lantern may then travel to the ground whilst still lit and become a risk to crops, woodland and property. The worst related fire dealt with by the Fire Service was on the 1st July 2013 when a serious fire in the West Midlands, involving 100,000 tonnes of recycling material and causing an estimated six million pounds worth of damage, was started by a sky lantern which landed at a plastics recycling plant in Smethwick.
- 7.5 In relation to Animal Welfare, after contact with the ground the leftover thin wire frame will rust away very slowly, remaining a hazard to pets, wild animals and livestock that may ingest the material. Additionally many smaller animals may become entangled in the debris left on the ground.
- 7.6 There are also significant risks to Consumer Safety as the product when lit shows a naked flame which could conceivably lead to injuries if used incorrectly or if obtained by children.
- 7.7 Many national organisations already support the ban on sky lantern releases, including the RSPCA, RSPB, the National Farmers Union, the Marine Conservation Society and the Chief Fire Officers Association.

Mark Trillo
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