

REPORT TO:	ENVIRONMENTAL & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 8
DATE OF MEETING:	10 NOVEMBER 2022	CATEGORY: RECOMMENDED
REPORT FROM:	STRATEGIC DIRECTOR (CORPORATE RESOURCES)	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	SEAN MCBURNEY – HEAD OF CULTURAL & COMMUNITY SERVICES	DOC:
SUBJECT:	PROPOSED BAN ON RELEASE OF BALLOONS ON SDDC LAND	
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL WARDS	TERMS OF REFERENCE: (See Notes)

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the committee note the environmental damage caused by balloon plastic, wire and string litter to livestock and wildlife. Also, Sky lanterns and balloon releases pose a danger to aircraft.
- 1.2 That the committee agrees to issue a statement that the deliberate or accidental release of balloons of any kind is not permitted on SDDC owned or managed land, to suggest alternative ways of fundraising or commemoration and insist that any balloons used at events should be always tied securely and disposed of appropriately. This is to be supported by educational messages on the unintended associated environmental impact of balloon releases.
- 1.3 To share the report and recommendations with Derbyshire County Council and Parish Councils who are significant landowners in the district to encourage similar statements.

2.0 Purpose of the Report

- 2.1 To update Members on the consequences of balloon releases which result in littering and environmental damage and suggest that we join the growing number of English and many other Scottish/ Welsh councils which have banned this activity on public land.
- 2.2 To also highlight a recent statement from East Midlands Airport Engagement Team.
- 2.3 Remind committee of previous related policy around ban on releases of Sky lanterns on SDDC land and to update to incorporate balloons.
- 2.4 To note and support the widespread adoption of similar measures by other councils and the strong support from the National Farmers Union and Marine Conservation

Society for these measures and the positive publicity this will create for SDDC's environmental credentials

3.0 Executive Summary

- 3.1 Conservation charities and mainstream organisations like the National Farmers Union and The Marine Conservation Society have raised concerns about litter from balloon releases travelling a long way across country and into the sea and causing issues for livestock, wildlife and the appearance of the natural environment.
- 3.2 Across the UK 50 councils (33 in England) have already banned the release of balloons and will share information about how this has worked in practice if this report is approved. The Council's nearest neighbour which has implemented a ban is Nottinghamshire County Council. Balloons released in South Derbyshire rarely cause litter in South Derbyshire. Meaning a national approach is needed.
- 3.3 Balloon releases also have a potential cost both the Council and other landowners which have to clean up unsightly balloon litter, most obvious on road verges. There is also a potential cost to farmers who occasionally lose livestock when balloon litter is eaten.
- 3.4 East Midlands Airport released a statement and supporting educational material around Drones, fireworks, toy balloons and sky lanterns highlighting the dangers to aircraft. It states -Balloons, particularly if released in large numbers, could damage aircraft engines and cause aircraft to have to divert from their flightpath to fly around them. Foil balloons can also interfere with radar and navigation systems - See appendix A

4.0 Detail

- 4.1 These issues are unintentional as people and charities organising and participating in the release of balloons do so with strong positive motivation linked to commemoration or fund raising. Environmental organisations such as the Marine Conservation Society have a list of potential alternatives to balloon releases included in their resources to support Councils and individuals.
http://www.mcsuk.org/what_we_do/Clean+seas+and+beaches/Campaigns+and+policy/Don't+Let+Go+-+resources
The Marine Conservation Society explains how and why balloons cause damage including long-term persistence in the natural environment, use of scarce resources (helium) and the creation of harmful visual litter which can be eaten by or trap wildlife and some livestock.
- 4.2 Social media channels and press releases will be used to encourage the public to act responsibly and consider the risks posed through the release of balloons and sky lanterns, particularly to wildlife, livestock and the environment
- 4.3 The Council will inform event organisers of its Balloon and Sky Lantern Release Policy by means of including relevant information within booking forms, and other appropriate material.
- 4.4 The Council will include appropriate provisions within any new tenancy agreements, leases, licences of its land and premises. Whilst the ban relates solely to Council owned land and premises, the Council will promote the awareness of the potential harm of balloon and sky lantern releases.

4.5 The Forestry Commission (FC) is actively considering a similar ban. A restriction has already been incorporated into its lease of The Glade at Rosliston Forestry Centre which is on FC land.

5.0 Financial Implications

5.1 The cost of approving a ban of balloon releases on Council owned land is limited to minimal staff time to deal with enquiries.

6.0 Corporate Implications

Employment Implications

6.1 None

Legal Implications

6.2 Although it is possible to fine people for deliberately dropping litter, it is difficult to pinpoint the source of the balloons.

Corporate Plan Implications

6.3 This initiative supports the values of the corporate plan that we take pride in our place. We will promote responsible behaviour and are committed to creating a more sustainable district.

Risk Impact

6.4 There is a risk to the environment and wildlife by not having a ban in place.

7.0 Community Impact

Consultation

7.1 This proposal will be supported by social media and press release to help raise awareness.

Equality and Diversity Impact

7.2 None

Social Value Impact

7.3 This proposal will have a positive impact on Social Value By raising awareness of positive ways to take community action and reducing the amount of balloon litter created within the district both elements are supported by the proposed ban.

Environmental Sustainability

7.4 SDDC will be seen to support a campaign with strong environmental credentials and be the first District in Derbyshire and The National Forest area to do so.

8.0 Conclusions

8.1 Considering the environmental impact of balloon releases and the information from East Midlands Airport, it is appropriate to issue a statement that the deliberate or accidental release of balloons of any kind is not permitted on SDDC owned or managed land.

8.2 This is to be supported by a social media campaign and press releases to create awareness and educate the public.

8.3 To share this approach and recommendations with Derbyshire County Council and Parish Councils who are significant landowners in the district to encourage similar statements.

9.0 Background Papers

Appendix A – East Midlands Airport Data Sheet.

Notes:

* Category – Please see the Committee Terms Of Reference in [Responsibility for Functions - Committees](#). This shows which committee is responsible for each function and whether it has delegated authority to make a decision, or needs to refer it elsewhere with a recommendation.

** Open/Exempt - All reports should be considered in the open section of the meeting, unless it is likely that exempt information would be disclosed. Please see the [Access to Information Procedure Rules](#) for more guidance.

*** Committee Terms Of Reference in [Responsibility for Functions - Committees](#).