

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

WEDNESDAY 10 JANUARY 2018

RELEASE OF HELIUM BALLOONS AND SKY LANTERNS

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

(Contact: Keith Butler, Tel: (01993) 861521)

(The Cabinet's decision on this matter will be a resolution)

1. PURPOSE

To consider the recommendations of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding the adoption of measures to address the release of helium balloons and sky lanterns.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Cabinet considers the recommendations of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee and determines what, if any, action it wishes to take.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 At its meeting on 7 December 2017 the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee gave consideration to a report prepared by the Group Manager, Environmental and Regulatory Services regarding the impact of helium balloons and sky lanterns on the natural environment, public safety, and animals in West Oxfordshire. A copy of that report can be viewed on the Council's website [here](#) and a copy of the relevant extract from the minutes of that meeting is attached to this report as Appendix A

3.2 At that meeting the Overview and Scrutiny Committee resolved:-

- (a) that, arising from the evidence outlined in the report, the Cabinet be recommended to introduce a policy to prohibit the release of helium balloons or sky lanterns on land in the ownership of the Council, or under its control; and
- (b) that the Cabinet be recommended to ask officers to contact all Town and Parish Councils in the District to make them aware of the risks to the environment, public, and animals from helium balloons and sky lanterns, and to ask them to consider taking steps to prohibit the release of balloons or sky lanterns on land in their ownership or under their control.

3.3 The Cabinet is invited to consider the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's requests.

4. ALTERNATIVES/OPTIONS

- 4.1. The Cabinet could decide to approve the implementation of some or all of the recommendations.
- 4.2. The Cabinet could decide, based on the information in the report, to note the information and not to approve the implementation of the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. The cost of implementing recommendation (a) would be met by existing resources that would refuse any future requests to release helium balloons and sky lanterns on land that is owned and/or controlled by the council.
- 5.2. The cost of implementing recommendation (b) and write to all town and parish councils would be approximately £140 in officer time.

6. RISKS

The risks are outlined in the report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

7. REASONS

To protect and enhance the environment of West Oxfordshire and maintain the district as a clean, beautiful place with low levels of crime and nuisance.

Keith Butler
Head of Democratic Services

(Author: Paul Cracknell, Tel: (01993) 861523; Email paul.cracknell@westoxon.gov.uk)

Date: 29 December 2017

Background Papers:
None

Extract from the minutes of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee –

7 December 2017

RELEASE OF HELIUM BALLOONS AND SKY LANTERNS

The Committee received and considered the report of the Group Manager, Environment and Regulatory Services, which reported on the findings regarding the impact of helium balloons and sky lanterns on the natural environment, public safety and animals in the District.

Mr Coles welcomed the report, drawing attention to the concerns he had previously raised, and stating that it was important for the Council to make a symbolic statement for the benefit of farmers and the protection of the environment. He proposed that Cabinet should be requested to take the steps outlined in recommendations (b) and (c) in the report. It was -

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the information in the report be noted;
- (b) That, arising from the evidence outlined in the report, Cabinet be recommended to introduce a policy to prohibit the release of helium balloons or sky lanterns on land in the ownership of the Council, or under its control; and
- (c) That Cabinet be recommended to ask officers to contact all Town and Parish Councils in the District to make them aware of the risks to the environment, public, and animals from helium balloons and sky lanterns, and to ask them to consider taking steps to prohibit the release of balloons or sky lanterns on land in their ownership or under their control.