

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **POLICY PROHIBITING BALLOON, LANTERN AND SIMILAR RELEASES**

#### **1. Preamble**

- 1.1. The release of balloons, lanterns and other items into the environment can make an impressive sight. Such activities are on the increase, despite viable alternatives being available.
- 1.2. Evidence is mounting of the serious harm releases of such items into our environment can cause to livestock, wildlife, people and property and the hazard they create from interfering with legitimate Coastguard and Civil Aviation Authority activity.
- 1.3. Aberdeen City Council (“Council”) has introduced a policy prohibiting such activities associated with the Council. This emphasises the Council’s commitment to its people and place, aligns with partners who advocate such a policy and adds to the growing number of local authorities with a policy.
- 1.4. Often event organisers are ignorant of the issues and alternatives. The policy will be publicised fully, to help overcome this. It is anticipated that this will also lead to a reduction in private releases.

#### **2. Balloons and lanterns**

- 2.1. “Balloon” refers to an inflatable bag made from a synthetic or natural material, filled with gas or hot air for lift.
- 2.2. “Chinese” or “sky” lanterns are made of thin paper or other material, held by a wire or bamboo frame and lifted by heat from a naked flame.
- 2.3. The above include degradable and biodegradable forms which have been proven can still cause hazard or harm.

#### **3. Policy**

- 3.1. The Council prohibits intentional, uncontrolled releases of items, including balloons and lanterns, into the general environment; air, land and water.
- 3.2. This policy includes the intentional, uncontrolled release of any items which have the potential to cause hazard or harm, i.e. “rubber ducks” into water without a plan for their collection.
- 3.3. This policy covers all Council owned property (facilities and land)\*, Council employees and Council endorsed or supported events, including those not on Council owned property. \*Land below the high water mark of ordinary spring tides is not generally in the ownership of the Council.

- 3.4. The Council will raise awareness of the economic and environmental consequences of such activities and promote alternatives.
- 3.5. It is the responsibility of all Council Services, including its arms-length external organisations, to comply with, implement and enforce this policy as appropriate to their Service.
- 3.6. This policy will be regularly reviewed to ensure it remains fit for purpose for all.

#### **4. Enforcement**

- 4.1. The Council has powers to issue fixed penalty notices under [section 87 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990](#), which states: “it is an offence to throw down, drop or otherwise deposit and then leave litter in a public open place.” This is illustrative of the Council’s powers with regards to this matter. It is not suggested the Council take this approach with regards to this Policy.
- 4.2. Instead, enforcement could take, but is not limited to, the following means:
  - 4.2.1. where an external party wilfully disregards the policy, the Service with an agreement with that party can address it under the terms of that agreement, i.e. terminating the agreement or not entering into future agreements; and
  - 4.2.2. where an employee wilfully disregards the policy, in the course of their employment duties, this can be addressed by their manager in the context of the Council’s Core Behaviours.

#### **5. Alternatives**

- 5.1. Balloon, lantern and similar releases are popular means of fundraising, commemoration and celebration. However, there are a number of viable alternatives that do not present the same negative outcomes.
- 5.2. These include, but are not limited to:
  - 5.2.1. Planting in remembrance – planting a tree or garden benefits the environment as well as providing a memorial which can be visited for many years.
  - 5.2.2. Flower water release – release of flowers or petals encapsulates a similar sense of farewell without the negative consequences, assuming the flowers are native and an appropriate quantity released.
- 5.3. More alternatives are provided by [Balloons Blow](#) and the [Marine Conservation Society](#).