

North Tyneside Council

Report to Council

26 November 2020

Title: Motions

Notice has been received of the following motions from Members of the Council to be put to the Council meeting.

1. Motion signed by Councillors A Austin, J Wallace and L Miller

MOTION TO BAN THE INTENTIONAL RELEASE OF BALLOONS AND SKY LANTERNS ON COUNCIL OWNED LAND

In recent years the release of large numbers of balloons and sky lanterns has increased, whether as a celebration or as a memorial to a loved one.

Whilst fully appreciating the emotions behind such events there is no doubt that when these lanterns and balloons return to the ground, they become simply litter, damaging our environment and threatening our wildlife.

This motion calls on Elected Mayor and Cabinet to consider a ban on the intentional release of balloons and sky lanterns for commemorative, social or publicity purposes, because of the serious environmental damage the resultant litter causes to marine life, birds, animals and the wider environment.

Balloons and lanterns can become a serious form of pollution for marine wildlife – the two main threats being ingestion (eating a balloon or pieces of balloon due to mistaking them for prey items such as jellyfish) or getting tangled up in balloon string or ribbon.

The list of marine creatures evidenced to have been affected by balloon entanglement and/or ingestion includes dolphins, whales, turtles, and seabirds, and so far includes 170 different species of marine life.

Lanterns and balloons (especially those filled with helium) can travel for many miles before coming back down to land, and farm animals have died after ingesting them.

Sky lanterns also pose a fire risk – in 2009 one sparked a blaze which claimed the life of a ten year old boy. Another caused a devastating fire at a zoo in Germany which killed 30 animals and birds.

There is a risk of fire to standing straw, thatch roofs, bales of hay, and crops in the summer months. Lanterns have been the cause of a number of false alarm call outs on the coast as people mistake them for distress flares. They can pose a risk to aircraft, and cost councils money to clean up.

We believe that the proposed ban should also apply to balloons described as "biodegradable" since evidence has shown that the latex they are made of can still take up to six months or more to degrade, and in that time, still poses a threat to the safety of our wildlife.

We fully appreciate that many of these balloon and lantern releases are linked to remembering lost loved ones, so we further request that the Elected Mayor and Cabinet identifies one or more pieces of land which could be repurposed as "Memorial Meadows" where grieving families can scatter wildflower seeds, and return to visit from time to time. This would serve to promote biodiversity, encouraging butterflies and bees, but would also allow loved ones to be remembered.

Bans are strongly supported by numerous organisations such as the RSPCA, the Marine Conservation Society and the National Farmers' Union, and a great many councils throughout the UK have now banned intentional balloon and lantern releases, including locally Newcastle, South Tyneside and Northumberland.

This is a non-political issue of huge importance environmentally, and we hope all members present will support this important motion.

Legal Implications:

There are no direct legal implications for the Authority from this motion. However, in considering the implementation of the motion the Elected Mayor will need to consider the powers available to the Authority to ban this kind of activity. Furthermore in relation to the identification of "memorial meadows" the Elected Mayor will need to consider any land management/legal issues associated with any land identified for this purpose.

Financial implications:

We anticipate there are financial implications if the motion is approved arising from the need for potential enforcement action.

2. Motion signed by Councillors Sean Brockbank, Pam McIntyre and Lewis Bartoli

Since the passing of the Local Plan by North Tyneside Council there have been various national and local changes, which will impact on delivery of the potential number of houses indicated as part of the Council's Plan.

The Government's planning reforms will have a significant impact on the delivery of home building across the region, and country. These reforms were not known at the time of the development of North Tyneside's Local Plan.

I believe the population growth projections which were used by the Council to predict the number of incoming residents to live in these properties relies on older data than is currently available. As such, it is my view that the Local Plan is predicated on out-of-date information that may well impact on the number of homes required.

We call upon the Mayor to clarify to the residents of North Tyneside how she plans to address these areas of change.

Legal Implications

There are no direct legal implications for the Authority arising from this motion.

Financial Implications:

There are potential financial implications arising from the motion in terms of capacity and resource to update the assumptions and predicted growth projections.

3. Motion signed by Councillors Carl Johnson, Martin Rankin and Carole Burdis

Council notes:

- that the COVID-19 crisis has had a profound impact on children's education, particularly those in year 11 and year 13;
- that students in the borough and across the country have missed at least 5 months of face to face teaching;
- that there has been no guidance on a "Plan B" in the event that GCSE and A' Level examinations cannot take place;
- that in a number of subjects, including Maths and Science, teachers have been told there will be no changes to the content students will be examined on despite missing 5 months of face-to-face teaching;
- that the debacle of last summer results where the Conservative government initially denied many students their rightful results were entirely avoidable;
- that despite pupils now being back in school, many continue to miss face to face teaching due to self-isolation, and some pupils are now in their second 14 day period of isolation.

Council believes:

- that it will once again be the most disadvantaged pupils who suffer if the government do not act and layout their strategy for next summer's exams;
- that the announcement of a 3-week delay to next summer's exams is simply not good enough and does little in replacing 5 months of teaching;
- that it would be a national outrage if we end up in a situation like last summer when teachers who know their pupils best were ignored in favour of an algorithm which was not fit for purpose.

Council calls upon the Mayor to:

- write to the Secretary of State to ask him to immediately:
- review and reduce the content of next summer's examinations on account of students having missed 5 months face to face teaching.
- Immediately publish his "Plan B" should circumstances require that examinations be cancelled.
- work with teachers and school leaders to come up with a robust system of assessment, should examinations not be possible in the summer.
- ask exam boards to publish what support and consideration they will offer to students who miss additional teaching time due to Covid-19.

Legal Implications:

There are no direct legal implications for the Authority arising from this motion.

Financial Implications:

There are no direct implication of the motion in terms of making a request to the Secretary of State

4. Motion signed by Councillors Peter Earley, Cllr Brian Burdis and Bruce Pickard

Council Notes that

Between 2014 and 2019 the greatest increase in child poverty across the UK was in the North East, where it rose nine percentage points.

That the North East has the second highest rate of child poverty in the UK at 35% and that this equates to almost 11 children and young people in a class of 30 who are now in poverty.

That in North Tyneside we currently have a child poverty rate of 31%

That whilst these figures are serious, they are even more alarming when noting that they do not take into account the devastating effects of the Covid 19 pandemic on household incomes.

Council believes

That it is unconscionable that so many of our children and young people are living in poverty but recognises that it is not an issue which North Tyneside Council can tackle alone and that it requires urgent action by national government to resolve the problem.

Council therefore supports the call by the North East Child Poverty Commission and the End Child Poverty Coalition for government, as a matter of urgency, to produce a comprehensive plan to end child poverty and agrees that this plan should include

Retaining the £20 a week uplift in Universal Credit (introduced at the start of the pandemic and due to be removed in April 2021);

- Ending the benefit cap and two-child limit;
- Investing in all children with an increase to child benefit of at least £10 per child per week;
- Uprating of housing assistance in line with inflation; and
- Extending free school meals to all families in receipt of Universal Credit, and to those with No Recourse to Public Funds.

and calls upon the Mayor to write to the secretary of state to urge her to bring forward a comprehensive plan to end child poverty.

Legal Implications:

There are no direct legal implications for the Authority arising from this motion.

Financial Implications:

There are no direct financial implications as a result of the motion to write to the Secretary of State.

5. Motion signed by Councillors Martin Rankin, Willie Samuel and Carole Burdis

North Tyneside Council recognises the hard work and commitment of social care staff who have provided essential care to our most vulnerable residents during the coronavirus outbreak.

We welcome the Welsh Government's decision to pay social care staff a one-off flat rate payment of £500 and believe the UK Government should replicate this scheme for social care staff in England.

North Tyneside Council requests that the Elected Mayor writes to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care asking him to establish a similar scheme for social care staff in England

Legal Implications:

There are no direct legal implications for the Authority arising from this motion.

Financial Implications:

There are no direct financial implications of the motion to write to the Secretary of State.

6. Motion signed by Councillors Andy Newman, Gary Bell and Frank

Motion: Commonwealth and veterans' support.

We call upon the Elected Mayor to make the Authority's armed forces champions and lead officers aware of the difficulties experienced by commonwealth veterans currently applying for leave to remain in the UK and ensure that those who are currently experiencing problems, whether financial or immigration difficulties, are not disadvantaged whilst their applications for leave to remain in the UK are ongoing.

We also call upon the Elected Mayor to write to the prime minister, Kevin Forster the minister of state for immigration, and Johnny Mercer the minister of state for veterans affairs outlining this councils support for all commonwealth veterans who have served a minimum of 4 years being granted automatic and free of charge right to remain in the UK and that any veteran who completes 12 years of service to be automatically given British Citizenship.

Further, we call upon the Elected Mayor to write to Mary Glendon, MP for North Tyneside and Sir Alan Campbell MP for Tynemouth, on behalf of this council, to ask that they continue to press the government for a change in the legislation that affects those that have served diligently and honourably for this Country.

Legal Implications:

There are no direct legal implications for the Authority arising from this motion.

Financial Implications:

There are no direct financial implications arising from this motion.

7. Motion signed by Councillors Erin Parker Leonard, Janice Mole and Carole Burdis

White Ribbon Motion- Accreditation, ambassadors and pledges.

For Full Council

The White Ribbon Campaign works to end male violence against women by engaging with men and boys, raising awareness, influencing change and providing resources to make change happen. North Tyneside council agrees to call upon the Elected Mayor to support the White Ribbon Campaign.

According to the Office of National Statistics in 2019:-

- Almost one in three women aged 16-59 will experience domestic abuse in their lifetime.
- Two women a week are killed by a current, or former, partner in England and Wales alone.
- In the year ending March 2019, 1.6 million women experienced domestic abuse.
- Since the outbreak of the Covid 19 pandemic, Refuge, the largest charity dealing with domestic abuse in the UK, reported a 700% increase to its helpline in just one day.
- We believe the mental, emotional, physical, social and financial consequences of domestic violence need to be formally acknowledged and addressed.

North Tyneside Council requests the Elected Mayor to identify, engage and encourage staff members to be White ribbon ambassadors. White Ribbon Ambassadors are volunteers who are men who engage with other men and boys to call out abusive and sexist behaviour among their friends, colleagues and communities to promote a culture of equality and respect.

North Tyne side Council requests the Elected Mayor to work towards Accreditation. White Ribbon Accreditation programme ensures organisations take a strategic approach to ending male violence against women by engaging with men and boys, changing cultures and raising awareness.

North Tyneside Council requests the Elected Mayor to encourage men to make the Promise to never commit, excuse or remain silent about violence against women.
<https://www.whiteribbon.org.uk/promise>

This would strengthen a message to our community that violence against women is unacceptable and that North Tyneside Council supports this message. These developments would improve organisational culture, safety and morale and increase the knowledge and skills of staff members.

Legal Implications:

There are no direct legal implications for the Authority arising from this motion.

Financial Implications:

There are potential direct financial implications arising from this motion in terms of the resource required to deploy and embed the message across the authority in terms of staff awareness and training.

8. Motion signed by Councillors Jim Allan, John Harrison and Eddie Darke

Fireworks

That this Council calls upon our Elected Mayor and her Cabinet to seek a process to

- to require all public firework displays within the local authority boundaries to be advertised in advance of the event, allowing residents to take precautions for their animals and vulnerable people
- to actively promote a public awareness campaign about the impact of fireworks on animal welfare and vulnerable people – including the precautions that can be taken to mitigate risks
- to write to the UK Government urging them to introduce legislation to limit the maximum noise level of fireworks to 90dB for those sold to the public for private displays
- to encourage local suppliers of fireworks to stock 'quieter' fireworks for public display

Legal Implications:

There are no direct legal implications for the Authority from this motion. However, in considering the implementation of the motion the Elected Mayor will need to consider the powers available to the Authority to require event organisers to advertise their events.

Financial Implications:

There are financial implications arising from this motion in respect of the promotion of a public awareness campaign.