

Council 12 November 2020

Fireworks

Labour Group to move:

Council notes:

- 1 Fireworks are used throughout the year to mark events such as Bonfire Night, New Year, Chinese New Year and Diwali. Whilst they can bring enjoyment to some people, they can also cause significant injury and fear for other people and animals.
- 2 There is widespread public concern about the impact of fireworks on animals. The RSPCA receives hundreds of calls about this issue every year with November being the peak month for calls. The unpredictable, loud and high intensity noises made by many fireworks can cause psychological distress to animals and can lead to injuries as animals attempt to run or hide from the noise. Debris produced by fireworks can pose a hazard to animals if found on the land.
- 3 Almost 4,500 people in England attended A&E with injuries from fireworks in 2017, double the number in 2009-10, with the number of life-changing injuries rising every year. Half of those seen in hospital were aged 18 or under and 80% were male.
- 4 Fireworks release chemicals into the atmosphere, many of which are harmful to the environment. The colours in fireworks are created from metallic compounds which can have a negative impact on animal and human health. To produce the oxygen needed for an explosion, fireworks may contain oxidisers which dissolve in water contaminating rivers and lakes. Fireworks also release smoke and particulates which affect air quality.
- 5 The Fireworks Act 2003 and the Fireworks Regulations 2004 are the main pieces of legislation concerned with regulating firework use.
- 6 The current maximum permitted noise level for fireworks for public sale is 120 decibels. This is the equivalent to a jet aircraft taking off.
- 7 In 2018 a petition to ban the public sale of fireworks attracted more than 300,000 signatures
- 8 In 2019 Sainsbury's announced that it is to stop selling fireworks in all its stores after concerns over the distress they cause to pets, wildlife and elderly people.

Council believes:

- 9 In order to protect the public, animals and the environment, firework laws need to be strengthened with licensing introduced for all public and private displays at all times.

Council agrees therefore:

- 10 To welcome the decision by Sainsbury's to stop selling fireworks and to ask other retailers to follow suit.
- 11 To write to the relevant minister and our local MPs expressing this Council's support for:

Unless where specifically set out in the statute, motions approved at Council do not bind the Executive (Cabinet) but may influence their future decisions.

Councillors are reminded of their public sector equality duty which requires the Council to consider or think about how their policies or decisions may affect people who are protected under the Equality Act.

- a) The introduction of licensing for all public and private displays at all times with a process for local residents to object to the granting of a licence and a means for ensuring that due regard is paid to the impact on public and animal safety and on the environment of a proposed display;
- b) A prohibition on the public sale of fireworks except where they are to be used for a licensed display; and
- c) A reduction in the maximum permitted noise level of fireworks for private displays from 120 decibels to 90 decibels which is the equivalent of a car door slamming.

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