WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND BOROUGH COUNCIL

Balloon and Sky Lantern Release Policy 2018

1. **Introduction**

In recent years outdoor balloon and sky lantern releases have become a more common event at summer fairs, fundraising events, opening of new stores, or part of commemorative and celebratory occasions. However what is less known is what happens once these items have been released and the potentially harmful consequences for wildlife and property that can occur as a result of this form of celebration.

Although others have also undertaken research on this issue The Marine Conservation Society (an internationally recognized charity for the protection of seas, shores and wildlife) has produced a thorough and detailed Pollution Policy & Position statement on Balloons and Sky Lanterns, asking UK Local Authorities to recognize balloons and sky lanterns as a form of littering and to ban all outdoor releases. This stance is actively supported by the RSPCA , the National Farmers Union and many other public organisations.

2. **Objective**

The objective of this policy is to propose the intentional outdoor release of balloons and sky lanterns ("lanterns") as an act of littering, and thereby to discourage such activities in the Weymouth & Portland Borough Council area and to prohibit releases from Council owned land and premises.

3. **Parameters/Scope**

This policy covers the release of balloons and lanterns within the Weymouth & Portland Borough Council area and the Council's position in relation to the release of   balloons and lanterns from Council owned land and premises.

The policy covers all types of balloon and lantern materials. The main types of balloon are latex (rubber) and foil (also known as mylar) can include other materials.   Latex balloons, whilst biodegradable, may still persist in the environment for several years and sky lanterns typically contain a metal frame.

4. **Policy**

This Council prohibits the release of balloons and lanterns from Council owned land and buildings. This applies to Council run events and events run by third parties.

The Council considers the release of balloons and lanterns from any land or buildings as potential littering and will take action when advised to do so under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 where appropriate.

5. **Litter**

Where balloons and lanterns are released intentionally outdoors and are not disposed of responsibly, they litter the environment and as such this could be considered to be a potential offence under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005. Where the Council receives evidence of littering through the release of balloons and lanterns which are not disposed of responsibly, the Council may consider exercising its powers under the appropriate legislation.

6. **Permitted releases**

For the avoidance of doubt, piloted hot air balloons are not covered by this policy.

Helium balloons may also be permitted when used for research purposes, for example weather balloons, as long as supporting evidence is provided, identifying any risk and/ or any hazards to the environment and with any appropriate mitigation.

7. **Working with event organisers/ third parties/ lessees/ licensees**

Once the Council is notified of potential releases within the area of Weymouth & Portland Borough Council the Council will work with event organisers to suggest suitable alternatives to outdoor balloon and lantern releases and/ or to provide advice and guidance on the potential disposal of these items.

8. **Monitoring, Assessment & Review**

The Council will inform event organisers of the Balloon and Sky Lantern Release Policy by means of including relevant information within booking forms and other promotional materials.

The Council will also at its own discretion and where appropriate include details of this policy within any new leases or licences of land and/ or buildings where permitted events take place at those locations.

This Policy will be reviewed in two years time.