

REPORT OF Head of Paid Service

To: Community & Resources Committee

Subject: Firework Displays/Starlings Roosting Under Bideford Bridge (Petition)

Date: 10 June 2019

Reference:

PURPOSE OF REPORT: For Members to consider the Petition and to make recommendations on how to proceed
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1. INTRODUCTION

In line with the Council's Procedural rules, a Petition presented to Full Council on 25 February 2019, was subsequently discussed at Full Council on 23 April 2019, when Members recommended that the Petition be presented to Community & Resources Committee for further consideration.

2. REPORT

The Petition presented by Councillor Christie, on behalf of Mr Robert Durrant, concerned the alleged distress and harm caused by inappropriate firework displays authorised by Torridge District Council primarily to the starlings roosting under Bideford Bridge, but also to other wildlife, to pets and domestic animals and to people.

The Petition requested that the following remedial actions be taken:

- That the Council put policies in place to prohibit any further firework displays close to Bideford Long Bridge (too close is anything that causes the starlings to be disturbed from their roost by such displays).
- These policies should include refusal to license any inappropriate displays for which licensing is required, by any person for any reason at any time; and to ensure that permission is never given for such displays to take place on Council owned land.
- To ensure that all public and licensed firework displays within the vicinity of Bideford are of such a reduced noise level as to cause minimum possible distress to wildlife, pets, pet owners (on behalf of their pets) and vulnerable people.
- To ensure that no funding of any kind is given by Torridge District Council or individual Councillors from public funds allocated to their discretionary use towards any events which include the use of fireworks which are not of a low noise level.
- To ensure that monitoring of the effect of any future firework displays on the starlings, other wildlife including estuary birds and also bats, is undertaken during firework displays with a view to eliminating adverse effects if any are observed; and that any complaints from members of the public regarding the adverse effect of fireworks are investigated thoroughly and acted upon with robustness and sincerity in order to eliminate the problem so far as possible.



- That if Torridge District Council finds its existing powers (once they have been fully explored) inadequate to take the requested actions, they seek to create a by-law such as would given them the required powers.

Bideford Town Council has considered the matter at a number of meetings during the last couple of months.

The Town Council provide funding toward the New Years Eve event and have been evaluating a number of alternative options to the previous arrangements such as:

- Laser shows
- Silent fireworks
- Alternative venue

The findings are due to be reported to the Staffing, Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting to be held on 13 June 2019.

3. IMPLICATIONS

Legal Implications

TDC is responsible for Licensing of events such as firework displays where they take place on TDC Land

Financial Implications

N/A

Human Resources Implications

N/A

Sustainability/Biodiversity Implications

N/A

Equality/Diversity

N/A

Risk Management

N/A

Compliance with Policies and Strategies

Subject to any approvals made as a result of this report, other Policies may require updating eg grants and contributions to external bodies.

Data Protection (GDPR) Implications

N/A

Ward Member and Lead Member Views

Date of Consultation – Whilst referring to Bideford Bridge the remedial actions proposed would apply to the whole of the District



4. CONCLUSIONS

The recommendation from Full Council was for this Committee to give further consideration to this matter.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended:

That Members consider the remedial actions put forward by the Petition and what if any action to take.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Consultations: Date of Consultation – 30 may 2019

Contact Officer: Officers Consulted - JW/SD/SH

Background Papers:

