

Report of	Meeting	Date
Deputy Chief Executive (Introduced by the Executive Member (Economic Development Public Service Reform))	Executive Member Decision	29 June 2020

## FIRE PREVENTION ON OPEN SPACES

### PURPOSE OF REPORT

- To set out the council's approach to reducing the risk of wild fires started through the lighting of fires, barbeques and Chinese lanterns.

### RECOMMENDATION(S)

- That the council should continue to work with partners and other landowners to put in place measures to reduce the risk of wildfires in the borough.
- To restrict the lighting of fires (including barbeques) on council owned land, including complete banning on relevant land when advised by Lancashire Fire and Rescue that risks are heightened.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

- Following large-scale wildfires in recent years that has presented real risks to life and caused significant environmental damage particularly to the Rivington moors, the council has been working closely with partners to seeks ways to reduce the risk of fires starting in the future.
- Some of those measures may take some time to implement. Therefore, in the interim, it is proposed that the council should introduce restrictions on the lighting of fires on the relevant land that it owns.

<b>Confidential report</b> Please bold as appropriate	Yes	<b>No</b>
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<b>Key Decision?</b> Please bold as appropriate	Yes	<b>No</b>
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<b>Reason</b> Please bold as appropriate	1, a change in service provision that impacts upon the service revenue budget by £100,000 or more	2, a contract worth £100,000 or more
	3, a new or unprogrammed capital scheme of £100,000 or more	4, Significant impact in environmental, social or physical terms in two or more wards

### REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

(If the recommendations are accepted)

- The large-scale fires seen in the borough over recent years have caused significant environmental harm and presented a real risk to health and lives. The fires have often been caused by careless actions of people having barbeques. Restricting and banning the use of barbeques will take some steps to preventing future fires.

### **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

- To do nothing, which was rejected because the council owns land in the relevant areas and also has responsibilities to promote the health and wellbeing of its residents as well as protect the environment.
- To wait until work is completed on considering the possibility of a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO), which was rejected because Lancashire Fire and Rescue as a key and relevant partner are asking for support more quickly.

### **CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

- This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all		A strong local economy	
Clean, safe and healthy homes and communities	✓	An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area	✓

### **BACKGROUND**

- Over recent years, there have been a number of major fires on open spaces in the borough, most notably on the Rivington moors. These fires have often been linked to the use of barbeques and other open fires lit by people spending time on the moors.
- The council has been working with key partners, including Lancashire Fire and Rescue, Lancashire Police and United Utilities as well as neighbouring councils Blackburn and Bolton, to develop ways of reducing the risk of fires in the future.

### **PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDER**

- The council has considered the use of Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO) to limit and prevent open space fires. In the main the PSPO would be established to prohibit the lighting of fires and the use of barbeques and other sources of fire such as Chinese Lanterns.
- A PSPO would take time to establish and would not be in place for the 2020 summer months, so its value should be considered based on future years (post current Pandemic restrictions). The two PCSO's currently in place within Chorley are due for review in November 2020. This provides a suitable opportunity to consider the implementation of a borough wide PSPO including the above restrictions, within which key areas of risk would be identified.
- The council's officers will continue to work with partners to ensure that any PSPO implemented would have the desired impact. This will mean working with the police and major landowners to establish ways in which the PSPO would be enforced and working with neighbouring councils to seek consistency across the boroughs.

## THE COUNCIL AS A LANDOWNER

15. As an additional, and more quickly implemented alternative, to the public space protection order the council can use its powers as a landowner to restrict activity on its land. It is proposed that the council should do this in addition to continuing the work on the PSPO.
16. It is recommended that the council restricts the lighting of fires or barbeques on its land, and that officers should work with Lancashire Fire and Rescue to identify the relevant land and times of the year when restrictions would be imposed. Publicity would then be undertaken to raise awareness of the restrictions and the reasons for their introduction.
17. The council will also work to encourage other relevant landowners to introduce similar restrictions to then work together on enforcing those restrictions.

## IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

18. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors' comments are included:

Finance		Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	
Legal	✓	Integrated Impact Assessment required?	
No significant implications in this area		Policy and Communications	

## COMMENTS OF THE STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER

19. No comments

## COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

20. No comments

CHRIS SINNOTT  
DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Report Author	Ext	Date
Chris Sinnott	5337	19 June 2020

Following careful consideration and assessment of the contents of this report, I approve the recommendation(s) contained in Paragraph 2 of the report in accordance with my delegated power to make executive decisions.



Dated 29.06.20

**Councillor Alistair Bradley**  
Executive Member (Economic Development and Public Service Reform)