

Proposed Acceptable Use of Authority Owned Land Policy- Consultation Report

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Background

At its meeting held on 21 February 2022, Cabinet authorised the Director of Commissioning and Asset Management to develop and draft a new borough wide Policy setting out various activities to be prohibited on land owned, controlled, or managed by the Authority and that is accessible to the public.

This followed a rise in the number of Members Enquiries and complaints from members of the public received by the Authority about perceived inappropriate activities taking place in these locations.

An officer working group was subsequently established to shape the Policy to cover the locations detailed below:

- Beaches.
- Parks and country parks.
- Incidental areas of open space including the wagonways and bridle paths.
- Designated wildlife sites.

The following activities of concern were then considered in relation these locations, taking into consideration a number of key questions:

- The release of balloons and sky lanterns.
- Camping.
- Bonfires (unless a as part of a professional event authorised by the Authority).
- Unauthorised firepits.
- The release of fireworks (unless a as part of a professional event authorised by the Authority).
- The riding or racing of quadbikes, motorbikes, and mopeds.
- Intrusive metal detecting involving digging on land.

As a result of this work, a draft Policy was produced and a public consultation process undertaken for 6 weeks from the 15th of August 2022, in advance of it being considered for formal adoption by the Authority.

The results of the consultation are contained in this report.

Summary

Respondents were asked for each of the five locations, beaches, parks, country parks, incidental areas of open space (including the wagonways and bridle paths), and designated wildlife sites if they strongly agreed, agreed, neither agreed nor disagreed, disagreed or strongly disagreed that the activities should not be permitted. Each proposal was listed separately so the number of respondents for each proposal and for each location varied. 578 responses were received to the survey, with all proposals receiving a majority agreement/strong agreement.

Proposal to restrict certain activities our beaches

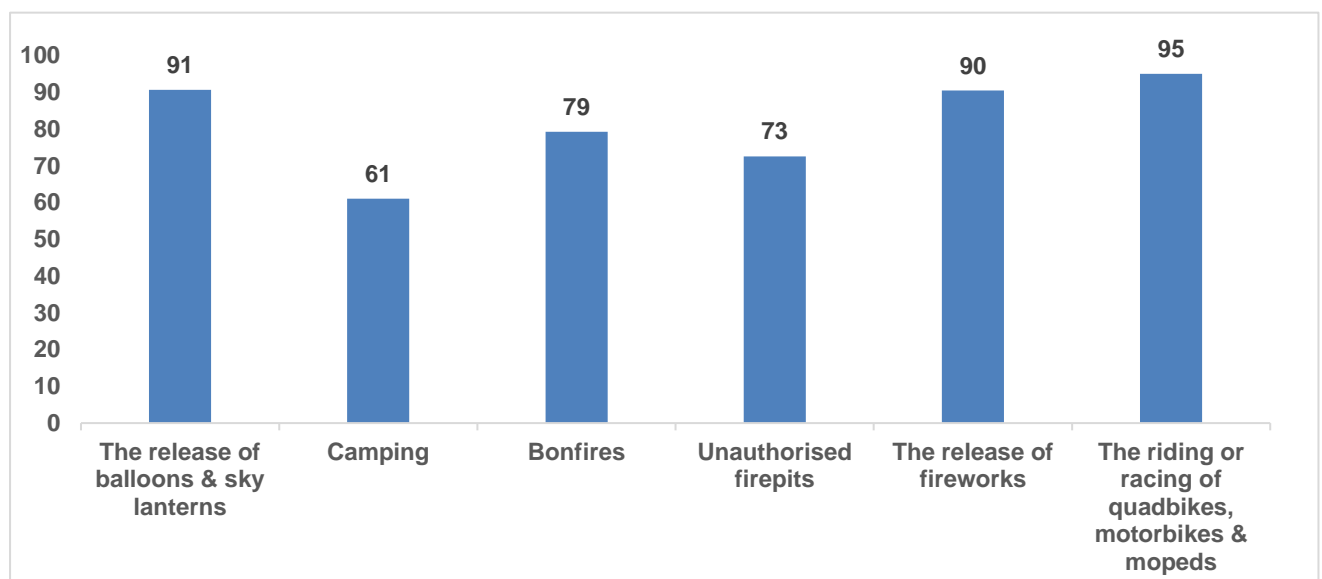
The majority of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed to all the proposals put forward. The number of respondents varied between 526 and 575 for each activity.

95% of respondents support banning 'the riding or racing of quadbikes, motorbikes and mopeds', 91% the banning of 'the release of balloons and sky lanterns', 90% the banning 'the release of fireworks (unless a as part of a professional event authorised by the Council)', 79% the banning of 'unauthorised firepits', 73% banning 'Bonfires (unless a as part of a professional event authorised by the Council)' and 61% the banning of 'camping', see figure 1.

In the comments left (208) most stated their support for the proposals, with a number focusing on how important the proposals around fireworks, sky lanterns and balloons were. Support for the banning of quadbikes and motorbikes was also noted. Many people highlighted the importance of protecting our wildlife, however concerns were raised about the enforcement of the proposals. People spoke of the disappointment that a minority of people misusing the beaches has led to bans being needed.

Additional concerns were raised around alcohol consumption on beaches, anti-social behaviour, noise pollution, drones, the use of disposable BBQs and litter. With a desire for more signage and enforcement around littering, and education on taking care of the environment more generally. Concerns around dogs, particularly around being off lead were also raised. A number of commentators wanted to see camping and fire pits remain, and to a lesser extent bonfires, with many suggesting they could have designated area or permits issued to allow them to continue. Some people commented on their disagreement with the proposals, with others desiring more clarity around metal detecting, and whether BBQs were included under fire pits. There were also calls for fire pit restrictions to apply to commercial operations on our beaches.

Figure 1: Percentage of respondents that agreed or strongly agreed that the listed activities should not be permitted on North Tyneside beaches. (Number of responses: 526-575).



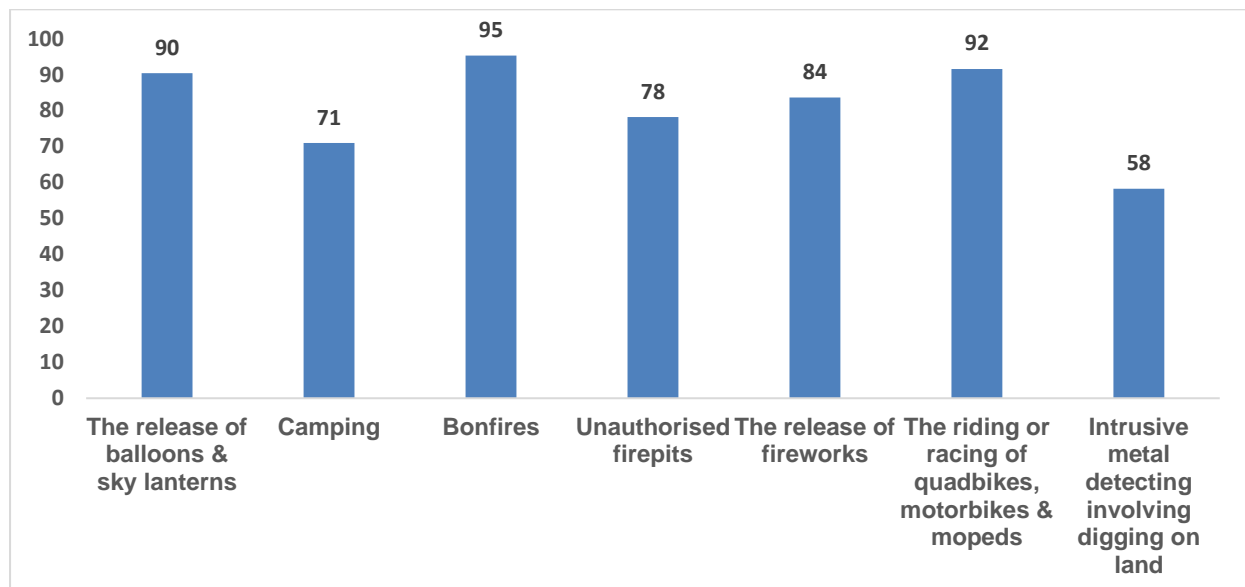
Proposal to restrict certain activities in our parks

As with beaches most respondents either agreed or strongly agreed to all the proposals put forward. The number of respondents varied between 522 and 571 for each activity.

95% of respondents support banning 'Bonfires (unless a as part of a professional event authorised by the Council)', 92% 'the riding or racing of quadbikes, motorbikes and mopeds', 90% the banning of 'the release of balloons and sky lanterns', 84% banning 'the release of fireworks (unless a as part of a professional event authorised by the Council)', 78% the banning of 'unauthorised firepits', 71% the banning of 'camping', and 58% banning 'Intrusive metal detecting involving digging on land' see figure 2.

Once again, of the comments made (140) most were in support of the proposals, with a number showing support for banning of quadbikes and motorbikes, fireworks, sky lanterns and balloons. Concerns were also raised around dogs off leads and rule enforcement around dogs, with additional concerns around anti-social behaviour, alcohol use, and the enforcement of the proposals. People were keen to note the importance of protecting wildlife and again people were disappointed a minority of groups misbehaviour had led to the need for bans. A number of people believed metal detecting should be allowed to continue as long as it was done with appropriate care, with permits or restrictions suggested and some people also wanted to see camping remain with permits. Suggestions around BBQ stands/areas were made to allow controlled use and discourage disposable BBQs.

Figure 2: Percentage of respondents that agreed or strongly agreed that the listed activities should not be permitted in North Tyneside parks. (Number of responses: 522-571).



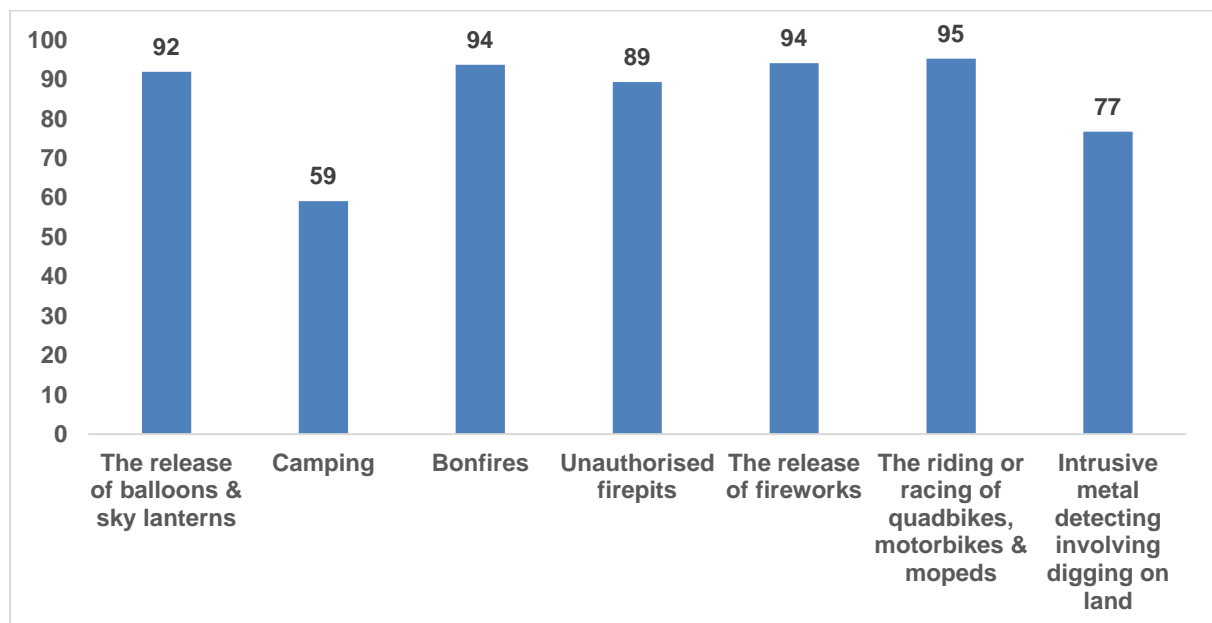
Proposal to restrict certain activities in our country parks

Strong agreement with the proposal was shown with most respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing to all the areas of the proposal. The number of respondents varied between 533 and 568 for each activity.

95% of respondents support banning 'the riding or racing of quadbikes, motorbikes and mopeds', 94% banning 'Bonfires (unless a as part of a professional event authorised by the Council)' and 'the release of fireworks (unless a as part of a professional event authorised by the Council)', 92% the banning of 'the release of balloons and sky lanterns', 89% the banning of 'unauthorised firepits', 77% banning 'Intrusive metal detecting involving digging on land' and 59% the banning of 'camping', see figure 3.

155 comments were made with the most commented on area being the desire to see camping remain, possibly in a restricted way, with permits or a designated campsite. Likewise, a number of people thought metal detecting should remain, suggesting it could be restricted with permits. Several people commented on their general agreement with the proposals and the importance of protecting wildlife. There was support for the banning of motorbikes, quads and mopeds, sky lanterns and balloons and fireworks. Concerns were also raised around dogs being off leads and how the policy would be enforced. A suggestion of firepit and BBQ areas was also raised by a number of people.

Figure 3: Percentage of respondents that agreed or strongly agreed that the listed activities should not be permitted in North Tyneside country parks. (Number of responses: 533-568).



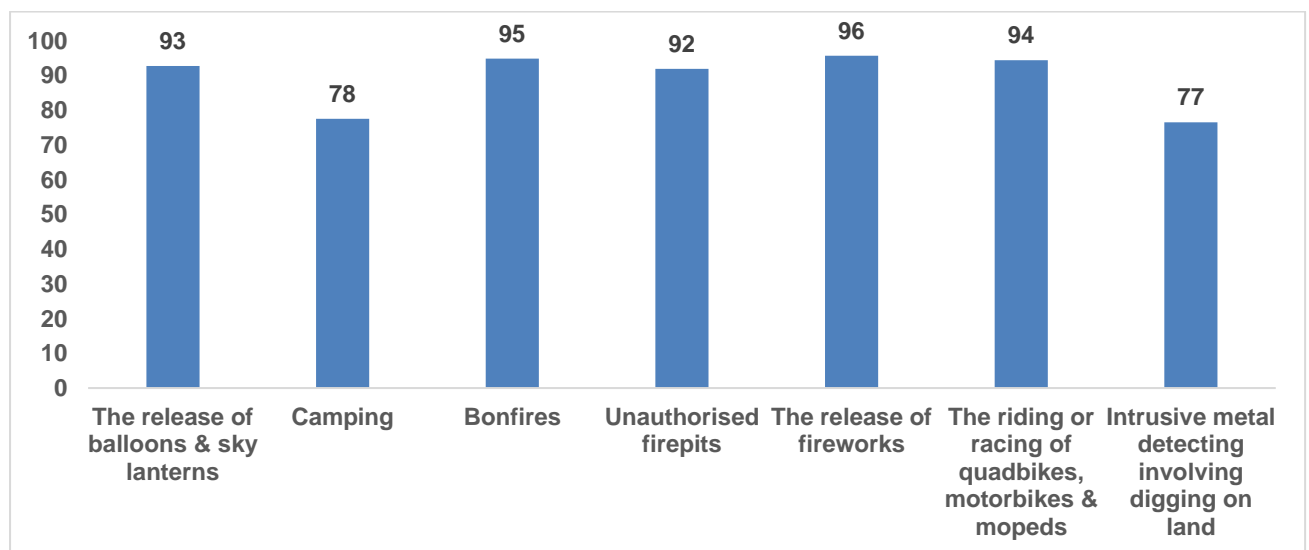
Proposal to restrict certain activities in our public space open areas including wagonways and bridle paths

High levels of agreement or strong agreement was expressed for the proposals by respondents. The number of respondents varied between 545 and 571 for each activity.

96% of respondents support banning the release of fireworks (unless a as part of a professional event authorised by the Council)', 95% banning 'Bonfires (unless a as part of a professional event authorised by the Council)' 94% banning 'the riding or racing of quadbikes, motorbikes and mopeds', 93% the banning of 'the release of balloons and sky lanterns', 92% the banning of 'unauthorised firepits', 78% the banning of 'camping' and 77% banning 'Intrusive metal detecting involving digging on land', see figure 4.

The most common concern of respondents in the comment section was riding and racing of motorbikes and quadbikes with 40% of the 126 comments left relating to banning them and concerns around safety. There were comments in agreement of banning fireworks, sky lanterns and balloons, as well as general agreement with the proposals. Respondents also raised concerns around electric scooters/bikes, unsafe cycling, and dogs being off lead. Several respondents believed that camping was fine or that it should be allowed with restrictions, similarly, there was the suggestion of metal detecting to be allowed to remain if restricted to certain areas or with permits. As previously there were concerns about wildlife as well as how the bans would be enforced.

Figure 4: Percentage of respondents that agreed or strongly agreed that the listed activities should not be permitted on North Tyneside on Public Open Space Areas including wagonways and bridle paths. (Number of responses: 545-571).



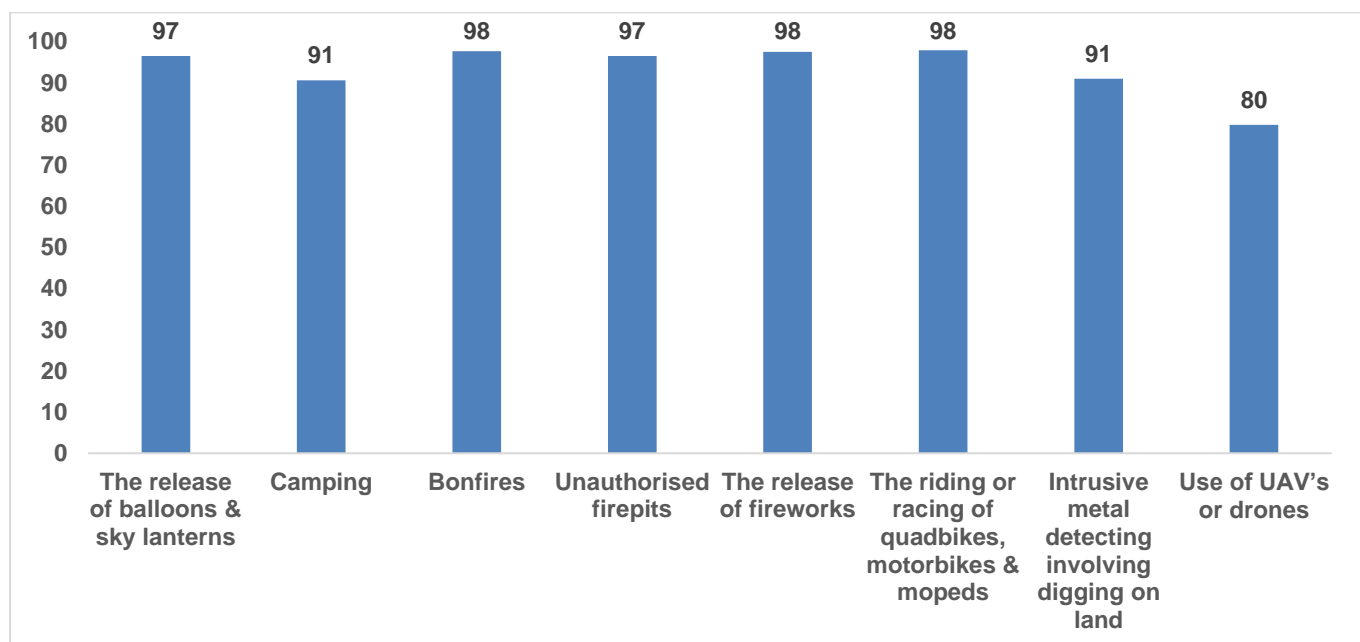
Proposal to restrict certain activities in our Designated Wildlife Sites

The highest percentage of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the proposals related to our designated wildlife spaces.

98% of respondents support banning the 'release of fireworks (unless a as part of a professional event authorised by the Council)', 'Bonfires (unless a as part of a professional event authorised by the Council)' and 'the riding or racing of quadbikes, motorbikes and mopeds', with 97% agreeing 'the release of balloons and sky lanterns', and 'unauthorised firepits' should be banned. 91% support the banning of 'camping' and 'Intrusive metal detecting involving digging on land', with 80% believing the use of 'Unmanned Ariel Vehicles (UAV's) or drones' should be banned, see figure 5.

Respondent's comments strongly supported the proposals with many noting their agreement and 40% of the 151 comments concerned about the impact of the activities on wildlife. A large number of comments related to agreement with banning drones, whilst half as many people commented that drones should be fully allowed or with restrictions. There were also comments that existing legislation already covered drone usage at wildlife sites and other comments that drone restrictions aren't enforceable. There was a desire to see an exclusion zone around coastal wildlife sites to prevent animals being disturbed by jet skis, paddle boards and other water-based activity. Concerns around dogs off lead were also raised, and a desire for more signage around the issue, with some respondents wanting to see a ban on dogs. There were concerns around noise pollution, and how the proposals would be enforced, as well as a desire to see more education around looking after the environment.

Figure 5: Percentage of respondents that agreed or strongly agreed that the listed activities should not be permitted on North Tyneside Designated Wildlife Sites. (Number of responses:551-573)



Demographics

Location

Of the respondents who provided postcode information 434 were residents of North Tyneside with 43 respondents from the Central area, 222 from the Coast, 124 from the Northwest of the borough and 43 from the Southwest. 69 respondents lived out of area and another 42 provided postcode information that was not identifiable to an area of North Tyneside or as out of area.

Sex

60% of respondents identified their sex as female compared to 51% of residents in North Tyneside, therefore females are overrepresented in the consultation respondents.

Age

Only 10% of respondents were aged 15-34 compared to approximately 22% of residents who fall within this age range. 22% of respondents were aged 35-44 which is more than the percentage of the population in that age range (approx. 13%) similarly 23% of respondents were aged 45-54 compared to 13% of the borough and 21% of respondents were aged 55-64 compared to 14% of residents. The number of respondents aged over 65 was approximately in line with the number of over 65's in the borough and 7% of respondents declined to answer the question.

Disability

19% of respondents identified as having a disability which is similar to the number of residents who have a disability.

Ethnicity

87% of respondents identified as White British compared to 93% of residents. 2% of respondents identified as White Other (2% of residents), and 2% as an ethnicity other than White compared to 5% of residents. However as 9% of respondents preferred not to say it is more difficult to compare with borough populations.