

CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

17 DECEMBER 2018

**REPORT OF SENIOR
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

CABINET DECISION

Portfolio holder for Arts, Leisure & Culture – Councillor Norma Wilburn

MEMORIAL LIGHTING CALENDAR

1. Summary

The extensive use of coloured or controllable lighting in our urban spaces has made it possible to light buildings, open spaces and key features in a particular colour for a time-limited event. In response there has been an increase in the number of requests received from members of the public, charities and community groups to use our lights to commemorate or celebrate specific events. In order to ensure that the use of lights to mark an event has impact it is important to limit the number of occasions on which we do so.

Lighting is increasingly being used to demonstrate sympathy with those who have experienced a disaster such as a major fire, earthquake or mass shooting. In such situations the subject is emotive and it is difficult to judge whether or not a local civic memorial lighting response is appropriate.

This report sets out a suggested guideline for the use of lights as a memorial to events or causes and incorporates a list of fixed annual commemorations that we believe should be acknowledged through the use of our lighting. This annual list, if approved would be published and reviewed annually in November each year

2. Recommendations

1. Cabinet is asked to approve the memorial lights guidance as a basis for determining which events should be marked by use of Council controlled lighting in the Borough.
2. Cabinet is asked to approve the list of recommended national and international days which will form the 2019 list of memorial lighting and which will then be reviewed annually.

3. Reasons for the Recommendation(s)/Decision(s)

To allow members to determine the guidelines by which certain events or commemoration days will be acknowledged with lighting and to provide clarity to the public. The report will also help members responding to enquiries from residents seeking to commemorate events with which they have an association or which they are seeking to champion.

4. Members' Interests

Members (including co-opted Members) should consider whether they have a personal interest in any item, as defined in **paragraphs 9 and 11** of the Council's code of conduct and, if so, declare the existence and nature of that interest in accordance with and/or taking account of **paragraphs 12 - 17** of the code.

Where a Member regards him/herself as having a personal interest, as described in **paragraph 16** of the code, in any business of the Council he/she must then, **in accordance with paragraph 18** of the code, consider whether that interest is one which a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest and the business:-

- affects the members financial position or the financial position of a person or body described in **paragraph 17** of the code, or
- relates to the determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to the member or any person or body described in **paragraph 17** of the code.

A Member with a personal interest, as described in **paragraph 18** of the code, may attend the meeting but must not take part in the consideration and voting upon the relevant item of business. However, a member with such an interest may make representations, answer questions or give evidence relating to that business before the business is considered or voted on, provided the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose whether under a statutory right or otherwise (**paragraph 19** of the code)

Members may participate in any discussion and vote on a matter in which they have an interest, as described in **paragraph 18** of the code, where that interest relates to functions of the Council detailed in **paragraph 20** of the code.

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

It is a criminal offence for a member to participate in any discussion or vote on a matter in which he/she has a disclosable pecuniary interest (and where an appropriate dispensation has not been granted) **paragraph 21** of the code.

Members are required to comply with any procedural rule adopted by the Council which requires a member to leave the meeting room whilst the meeting is discussing a matter in which that member has a disclosable pecuniary interest (**paragraph 22** of the code)

AGENDA ITEM
REPORT TO CABINET
24 JANUARY 2018
REPORT OF SENIOR
MANAGEMENT TEAM

CABINET DECISION

MEMORIAL LIGHTING CALENDAR

SUMMARY

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Lighting is increasingly being used to demonstrate sympathy with those who have experienced a disaster such as a major fire, earthquake or mass shooting. In such situations the subject is emotive and it is difficult to judge whether or not a local civic memorial lighting response is appropriate.

This report sets out a suggested guideline for the use of lights as a memorial to events or causes and incorporates a list of fixed annual commemorations that we believe should be acknowledged through the use of our lighting. This annual list, if approved would be published and reviewed annually in November each year.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Cabinet is asked to approve the memorial lights guidance as a basis for determining which events should be marked by use of Council controlled lighting in the Borough.
2. Cabinet is asked to approve the list of recommended national and international days which will form the 2019 list of memorial lighting and which will then be reviewed annually.

DETAIL

1. The extensive use of coloured or controllable lighting in our urban spaces has made it possible to light buildings, open spaces and key features in a particular colour for a time-limited event. The resulting images of spaces bathed in a single colour of light are then carried globally by social media and feed an appetite for other places to respond. As a result, there has been an increase in the number of requests received by Stockton Council to use our lights to commemorate or celebrate specific events or show allegiance with a particular cause.
2. If our lights were to change too frequently the impact would be reduced, a colour change would not be significant and the effect would be that few people would think the change in colour had any connotation. This applies to both the commemoration of fixed calendar events and responses to unexpected events and tragedies.

3. Apart from the reduced impact, there is also a concern about workload as the number of requests we are receiving is high and reprogramming of lighting systems takes staff time and coordination. A decision to change our lighting must also be disseminated so that people understand our intent and reasons when declining personal requests which are close to people's hearts.

Fixed events

4. In the absence of a published agreed list, members and officers receive regular requests from members of the public, charities, community groups etc., to change the lights to mark a specific day. Those making the request often have a personal and deeply felt commitment to the cause of issue being highlighted. It is therefore difficult to decline without causing offence.
5. Officers have compiled a list of those days/causes which have been the subject of regular requests or which denote a cause which has been identified by the Council as a priority, such as 'Show Racism the Red Card'. In addition, days which are international or which might overarch a number of separate issues which might also be marked, such as World Mental Health Day and Baby Loss Awareness Week are recommended for inclusion.
6. Since the coloured lighting of buildings will not in itself convey a campaign message, it is suggested that we prioritise alignment with substantive local or national campaigns. In this way, when the town hall is purple or red on a particular evening, there may be a reasonable prospect of the general public connecting that with media or social media coverage of the campaign in question.
7. The relevance of particular campaigns and causes will change over time and it should be assumed that the list of those commemorated through lighting will change. In electing to mark a cause in one year we are not undertaking to do so in perpetuity.
8. The controllability of lighting systems also provides the opportunity to mark something by their absence. To demonstrate our support for the environment in the face of climate change, we are proposing aligning ourselves with 'Earth Hour' by turning lights off on March 30th.
9. As a civic institution, it is recommended that we include the national Saints Days; St David's Day, St Patrick's Day, St George's Day, St Andrew's Day.
10. The suggested list of days is provided in **Appendix 1** and if approved will be published as the 2019 memorial lighting calendar.
11. Requests from the public or other organisations for different or additional commemoration days to be introduced will be noted and considered for inclusion in the subsequent year's calendar. A simple online form or enquiry process will be developed to allow people to submit basic information about what cause they would like to see considered for future memorial lighting and why.
12. Guidance for the review of memorial lighting requests internally, and a draft guidance note for the public which will be published online, are set out in **Appendix 2**.

Unexpected events

13. The Council is also often asked to respond to unexpected events such as natural disasters, terrorism attacks, or the death of significant individuals. As with the fixed calendar events, care must be taken to reserve our response to a limited number of occasions, to confer status on the event and reflect its seriousness.

14. There is no existing procedure for deciding which events to respond to. Flexibility should be retained and members' views will ultimately determine whether an event should be marked or not.
15. To help judge the appropriateness of marking an event with memorial lighting in the immediate aftermath of the event, it is recommended that guiding principles are applied. In particular, consideration should be given to the scale of the impact, an event should be judged to have a profound effect on the general public. An incident of the scale of the Grenfell Tower fire or the death of the Princess of Wales would be examples of such a profound effect.
16. It may be appropriate to mark a local event of a smaller scale, perhaps involving the death or serious injury of a number of local people, or a particularly emotive incident involving groups of vulnerable people. However care should be taken not to set a precedent by marking the death of individual residents, despite the emotional impact of the death on those closest to the individual.
17. The Guidance for the use of memorial lights set out in this report and summarised in Appendix 1, are intended to assist in making decisions over which events to respond to with memorial lighting. Requests will be judged against the guidelines and a recommendation made to the Leader of the Council for approval on a case by case basis.

COMMUNITY IMPACT IMPLICATIONS

18. The intention of this lighting policy is to ensure that proper consideration of memorial lighting to support campaigns and messages that are relevant to the Council and local residents. In doing so, consideration will be given to the extent to which endorsement for certain messages might imply a prioritisation of communities associated with that cause, and conversely the lower significance of communities associated with causes not marked.
19. However, in general, since the means by which each campaign or cause is being endorsed is through lighting in the public realm, the impact is open to all (except perhaps those with significant sight loss).

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

RISK ASSESSMENT

The use of memorial lighting and the determination of when and how to use lighting to celebrate a particular issue is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.

COUNCIL PLAN POLICY PRINCIPLES AND PRIORITIES

Selected use of coloured lighting to support key health messages, celebrate achievements and group identities', and add to the distinctiveness of our public spaces could contribute to all of our major policy priorities, including;

- Protecting the vulnerable through targeted intervention
- Promoting equality of opportunity through targeted intervention
- Developing strong and healthy communities
- Creating economic prosperity

CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS

This report does not contain corporate parenting implications, though there may be causes or campaigns which memorial lighting raises the profile of which are of particular relevance to our children in care.

CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS

The suggested list of dates/causes have been informed by requests by individuals and charitable organisations, and also by the promotional campaign priorities that have been shaped through consultation.

The publication of a suggested schedule or memorial lighting, and of the principles by which future lighting requests will be determined, will assist transparency. Consultation on any individual campaign will remain the responsibility of the authors of that campaign.

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Education related? No

Background Papers None

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors: All

Property Whilst the use of lighting systems for memorial purposes requires certain functionality of those systems, for the purposes of this report it is assumed that those systems, their purchase and maintenance are covered under existing agreed procedures or programmes.