

## **Council – 15<sup>th</sup> July 2021**

### **Notice of Motion**

#### **Support for the Licensing of Jet Skis and other powered water craft**

In November 2020 Hywel Williams, MP for Arfon, a coastal constituency based around Bangor and Carnafon, presented a Private Members Bill for its First Reading, in respect of the licensing of jet skis.

*In moving the Bill the MP stated that “Jet skis, or otherwise motorised personal watercraft, are powerful machines of up to 300 hp, which can lead to speeds of up to 40 mph on water. They are easy to tow and to launch from any beach. Compared with other watercraft, they are not expensive and their use has been growing for many years.....*

*Hon. Members may be surprised that in the UK, anyone can use a jet ski. No licence is required. There is no compulsory training or test of competence. The recommended lower age limit is 12 years. Local authorities and other bodies have limited regulatory powers, such as setting speed limits in some areas and specifying launching areas, but enforcement is difficult and can be expensive in a time of cuts....*

*Current regulatory measures are useful but cannot be a substitute for what is really needed, and that is a proper licensing system, with training and a test of competence, and proportionate enforcement, properly funded. Antisocial and, less commonly, the dangerous use of jet skis, sometimes associated with prior alcohol consumption, has long been a problem..... The UK is the only state in Europe without a licensing system.”*

We agree with the MP’s assessment and our officers have been discussing for some time, with the Marine Police and local interests how we as a coastal authority can tackle what is a growing problem.

As members of the LGA Special Interest Group of Bathing Water Safety, the Council is part of a group of members from around the coastline who are similarly considering the issue which is seen as requiring urgent action.

Very often these machines are launched from outside our Borough so arrive ‘in the water’ at speed with erratic courses and causing a danger to those in boats, swimmers and our fishing fleet, which some delight in ‘buzzing’ without any thought of the danger to themselves or others. The use and numbers of jet skis are increasing around our coastline and locally and consequently the dangers are also increasing. We regularly receive complaints from fishermen, residents and watercraft owners regarding the dangers.

The effect of the proposed Bill would be to require all such craft to be licensed (which includes the need for competency in their use) and make it an offence to be unlicensed. We would like to go a step further to ensure that jetskis are insured properly in the same way road vehicles have to be.

We therefore, move that –

1. This Council writes to Hywell Williams MP to express its support for the MP for Arfon in his efforts to bring the Jet Ski bill to the statute book and requests Southend MPs to also lend their support to the Bill and press for a Second Reading, which has yet to be listed.
2. That if this particular Bill should not proceed, Southend MPs be requested to act in the interests of their residents and visitors in promoting a Bill for the Licensing of Jet Skis in similar vein as swiftly as possible and to keep the Council informed of their progress.
3. That both 1 and 2 above also include the need for craft to be insured properly.

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