

STREET LIGHTING – PROGRESS

Summary

1. The Strategic Commissioner Major Projects and the Principal Project Engineer (Street lighting) have been invited to discuss progress on the roll out of Street Lighting reductions and potential energy savings.

Background

2. In 2012, the County Council spent £2.4 million per annum on energy costs for its 52,000 street lights and 8,000 illuminated road signs (19% of the Council's CO2 emissions). The County Council planned to reduce costs and emissions as part of the Council's Future Fit programme (previously BOLD). On 9 February 2012, Cabinet agreed to initiate a series of pilot projects to examine the benefits of street lighting reductions and asked scrutiny to consider the issue. A Scrutiny Task Group was set up to review: the various ways in which energy and cost savings could be made; the impact on communities; the views of local people; and recommend a way forward. The options considered were switching off, dimming and converting to energy saving lights.

Scrutiny Report

3. The scrutiny task group's report was published in December 2013. The scrutiny found that savings could be made by switching off lights for part of the night. The Task Group recommended dimming 250W high pressure sodium lights after 7.30pm and that a business case for LED should be developed using current figures. The Task Group also recommended clear criteria on which street lights should be kept on and a commitment to consult with local communities.

4. The report recognised some of the risks around tariff issues, the capital costs and reliability associated with the implementation of new technologies, the potential public response to significant turning off of street lights associated with perceptions of crime and disorder and potential legal liabilities associated with a potential increase in accidents on the highway.

5. Cabinet considered the report on 7 February 2013 and accepted the conclusions and detailed recommendations as the way forward. These are outlined in the Cabinet Member's response, attached at Appendix 1.

6. Following a successful trial in Droitwich, Cabinet approved a change in policy to switch off street lighting for part of the night and endorsed the street lighting energy saving project on 6 February 2014 ([see item 8, accessible at this weblink](#)). The legal position, options, challenges, work to date and next steps were outlined. The Director was authorised to undertake a public information exercise in affected areas in advance of the switch off programme

and proceed with the project as set out in the report. Areas deemed as traffic routes and major junctions were not part of the planned reductions. A total of 17,000 lighting points on residential roads were to be switched off between midnight and 6am. Feedback from residents in the trial area was mostly positive, although not all, with some wishing more could be turned off.

7. The Panel received an update on progress in May 2014 as the roll out in Redditch was just beginning. It was confirmed that in residential areas, lights would be left on at road junctions and bends to provide reference points for residents. Overall, about one third of lights would be turned off.

8. A further report on progress is attached at Appendix 2.

9. The Panel are asked to consider progress made on street lighting. In doing so, Members may wish to discuss:

- How are Members and the public informed about the switch off in advance and what contact details are provided? What provision has been made for those with no computer access? What is there in terms of dedicated officer support?
- How are requests by the public to turn lights back on dealt with? How many complaints have been received and what is the nature of the complaints? Have any lights been turned back on as a result?
- What evidence is there about the effect on crime levels and road safety in areas where lights have been turned off
- The business case for LED technology is changing rapidly. What alternative ways of funding LED lighting have been investigated and what progress has been made
- What are the estimated cost savings and reductions in CO2 emissions (tonnes per year)?
- Has there been any rise in the Councils Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC) payments?

10. Members are asked to determine whether it wishes to make any comments or recommendations to the Cabinet Member with Responsibility

- Appendix 1 – Cabinet Member's response to the Street Lighting Scrutiny Report (December 2012)
- Appendix 2 – Update on progress on the street lighting energy saving project

Purpose of the Meeting

Supporting Information

Contact Points

County Council Contact Points:

Worcester (01905) 763763, Kidderminster (01562) 822511 or Minicom: Worcester (01905) 766399

Background Papers

Specific Contact Points for this Report:

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In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Director of Resources) the following background papers relate to the subject matter of this report:

- Cabinet Agenda and Minutes of 9 February 2012, 7 February 2013, and 6 February 2014
- Agenda and Minutes of the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 27 February 2013, 9 May 2014
- Street Lighting Scrutiny Report (December 2013)

All of which are available on the Council's website at <http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cms/democratic-services/minutes-and-agendas.aspx>