

**STREETLIGHTING ENERGY SAVINGS CONSULTATION FEEDBACK**

*To:* **Highways and Community Infrastructure Committee**

*Meeting Date:* **12 January 2016**

*From:* **Executive Director: Economy, Transport and Environment**

*Electoral division(s):* **All**

*Forward Plan ref:* **N/A** *Key decision:* **Yes**

*Purpose:* **To inform the Committee of the feedback from the streetlighting energy savings stakeholder consultation exercises and to seek Members' views on savings proposals in light of the results**

*Recommendation:* **The Committee is asked to:**

- 1. Note the feedback from the Local Councils, Cambridgeshire Community Safety Partnership, Police Service and Public Consultation exercises;**
- 2. Consider reducing the hours of street light switch off by between one and two hours.**

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## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The County Council has identified a savings target in the current business plan of approximately £260,000 annually from its streetlighting energy costs. Of this, £174,000 was identified within the previous business plan and expected to be implemented from April 2015 by reducing night time lighting. However, in order to allow a period of consultation with local councils and the public about this proposal, this night time switch off was deferred until April 2016 and this saving could not be achieved in the 2015/16 financial year.
- 1.2 More than 30 other councils across the country, including most of our neighbours, have already implemented a system of part night lighting.
- 1.3 In order to meet the business plan savings required it was proposed to change the operational lighting times for many County Council owned streetlights, along with the levels to which the streetlights are dimmed. The current proposal is to increase the period of streetlight dimming (currently 8pm or 10pm until 6am) to all times, and to turn off lighting in residential roads between midnight and 6am.
- 1.4 The proposals apply to street lights on the central management system (CMS) only; street lights not on this system or which are not owned by the County Council are not affected. Street lights on main traffic routes will not be switched off, nor those where closed circuit television (CCTV) is present, nor in roads where there is a statutory requirement for lighting (e.g. traffic calming features or mini roundabouts) or lights which it has been agreed support the night time economy in town or city centres.
- 1.5 To consider these proposals, consultation was undertaken in two phases. Firstly, a direct consultation with all local councils that would be affected by the proposal was undertaken, followed by a second, separate, public consultation. Specific stakeholder consultations also took place.

## **2. LOCAL COUNCILS CONSULTATION**

- 2.1 The consultation with local councils was undertaken between 7 July 2015 and 30 September 2015. A letter was sent to 40 affected local councils explaining the reasons for the proposal and inviting comments to ensure the Council had identified the highest priorities and to explore any alternatives or options for additional funding (see **Appendix 1**).
- 2.2 A separate specific consultation was also undertaken with Cambridge City Council due to the unique circumstances relating to the City. The consultation commenced on 21 May 2015 and has included a number of meetings with officers, councillors, representatives from the University, emergency services and residents at Area Committee meetings. In light of this consultation, a number of revisions to the original proposals were made to ensure that streetlights in areas where CCTV cameras operate were maintained before the public consultation commenced. Further discussions have also taken place with officers and Members at the City Council to assess the impact of the proposed switch off and means of mitigating that impact, including the potential for the City Council to part fund street lighting costs in Cambridge.

- 2.3 24 of the 40 local councils (excluding Cambridge City) consulted provided responses on the proposals, together with responses from The University of Cambridge, Cambridge Business Against Crime and the Cambridge Colleges' Bursars subcommittee for Fire Protection, Health and Safety, (see **Appendix 2**).
- 2.4 Of the 24 local councils who provided a response, 8 confirmed that they would be prepared to fund the costs of all, or some, of the streetlights in their areas proposed to be switched off between midnight and 6am. 14 councils stated they would not be prepared to fund the costs of the lights proposed to be switched off, although 3 of those confirmed they supported the proposal and an additional council now has no streetlights directly affected by the proposal. 2 councils asked to defer their decision until after the proposal was implemented to see any effects.
- 2.5 The University of Cambridge responded by asking the County Council to reconsider these proposals and ensure that their potential safety impact on residents and students is carefully assessed.
- 2.6 Cambridge Business Against Crime expressed their concerns regarding the potential impact on safety and crime levels in the city and the potential effect on business, especially on the night time businesses.
- 2.7 The Cambridge Colleges' Bursars subcommittee for fire protection, health and safety responded saying that the security of the students, staff, visitors and conference guests will be affected during the hours of darkness and therefore they disagree with the current proposal of part-night lighting in Cambridge City.

### **3. CAMBRIDGESHIRE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP CONSULTATION**

- 3.1 A consultation was held with the Cambridgeshire Community Safety Partnership in August 2015. The Partnership sought reassurance from the County Council that the proposal would not have a negative impact on levels of crime and anti-social behaviour.
- 3.2 The County Council commissioned the Cambridge Research Group to review all research and evidence on the impact of reducing streetlighting on crime and antisocial behaviour, and to provide the Partnership with a report on its findings (see **Appendix 3**).
- 3.3 The report concluded;
- Recently published research<sup>1</sup> has found no evidence of a relationship between the number of incidents of crime and streetlight switch off or part-night lighting.
  - That the evidence pointing towards the limited benefit of streetlights in reducing crime cannot be reversed and used to argue that withdrawing lighting will result in an increase.
  - The main academic evidence for the benefits of street lights such as that

relied upon by the College of Policing relates to the mid-1990s at the latest, but also back to the 1970s, a time when crime was much higher than it is today, making direct comparison to the current situation problematic.

- Previous research that has been completed on street lighting has been contradictory and subject to academic dispute.
- The best conclusion that can be drawn from the research literature is that the general benefit of street lighting in reducing crime is unproven but in very specific circumstances, where there is an existing crime hot-spot and current lighting is poor then improvements may prove beneficial.
- There is a strong association in the minds of the public between the presence of lighting and a feeling of safety. However, recent survey evidence<sup>2</sup> suggests that despite this, the introduction of part-night lighting won't change actual behaviour as other factors such as an area's reputation, personal feelings of vulnerability and time-specific circumstances (such as pub closing times) have a stronger influence.
- In the light of these findings it can be considered highly unlikely that the Cambridgeshire part night lighting scheme will cause an increase in crime.

#### **4. POLICE SERVICE CONSULTATION**

- 4.1 Cambridgeshire Police have been consulted on the proposals and this has involved discussions throughout the Constabulary. This has included the Crime Prevention Design Team, the Assistant Chief Constable, Operations, and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. In response, the Constabulary have said that they are cognisant of the pressures and reality of the current economic situation and are keen to work with the County Council to provide a solution which is proportionate, considered and reasonable. Taking note of professional experience, and utilising a mechanism of assessment and review, they recognise the need to reduce costs where possible, while maintaining a clear eye on consequence and public safety. They asked that the process should reflect local operational concerns, where justified and appropriate, and that we jointly monitor any effects accordingly and make adjustments where necessary.
- 4.2 In taking account of this feedback, officers have liaised with the Crime Prevention Team to ensure that streetlighting in areas of concern to the Police is maintained in the proposals.

#### **5. PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 A Public Consultation was undertaken between 27 October 2015 and 11 December 2015. Primarily, this took the form of an on-line survey but alternative forms in paper format, on audio cassette, Braille, large print or in other languages were available to anyone who requested them.
- 5.2 The consultation was publicised on the home page of the County Council's web site and a press release was issued to all local media. A second press

release was issued midway through the period to remind the public of the consultation.

- 5.3 A total of 1,865 responses were received to the public consultation exercise. 31% of respondents stated they agreed with the proposal to increase the dimming of streetlights whereas 60% stated they disagreed. 19%, (350), respondents stated they agreed with the proposal to introduce part night lighting, 78%, (1451), of the respondents stated they disagreed with it.
- 5.4 The level of disagreement to the part night lighting proposal by the public is significant, particularly in the City of Cambridge, who represented two thirds of the respondents, and from students, who represented a third of the total respondents.
- 5.5 A full analysis of the results is included in **Appendix 4**.

## **6. THE WAY FORWARD**

- 6.1 It is clear that significant concerns have been raised during the consultation exercises regarding the public's perception that street lighting is necessary for public safety and crime reduction. However, this is consistent with the evidence from the independent analysis undertaken in other areas prior to part night lighting being implemented elsewhere. In all cases the public have raised concerns about the negative effects of reduced streetlighting. However, there is no evidence from other authorities that have implemented this proposal that reduced street lighting has been associated with any increase in crime.
- 6.2 A review of other County Councils which have implemented part-night lighting and who publish the times of operation on their web sites is shown below. (See **Table 1**)

**Table 1**

<b>Highway Authority</b>	<b>Times of Part-night lighting</b>
Derbyshire County Council	12.30am – 5.30am
Dorset County Council	12.30am – 5.30am
Devon County Council	12.30am – 5.30am
East Sussex County Council	12.30am – 5.30am
Essex County Council	12.00am – 5.00am/1.00am – 5.00am
Gloucestershire County Council	12.00am – 5.30am
Hertfordshire County Council	12.00am – 6.00am
Kent County Council	12.00am – 5.30am
Leicestershire County Council	12.00am – 5.30am
Norfolk County Council	12.00am – 5.00am/1.00am – 6.00am
North Yorkshire County Council	12.00am – 5.00am
Oxfordshire County Council	12.30am – 5.30am
Somerset County Council	12.00am – 5.30am
Suffolk County Council	12.00am – 5.00am
North Somerset Council	12.00am – 5.00am
Staffordshire County Council	12.00am – 5.30am
Shropshire County Council	12.00am – 5.30am
Warwickshire County Council	12.00am – 5.30am/1.00am – 6.30am
Worcestershire County Council	12.00am – 6.00am
West Sussex County Council	12.00am – 5.30am

- 6.3 The part night lighting proposals represent a significant part of the Council's business plan with £260k of savings annually attached to the proposals. Members will therefore want to consider carefully the results from the consultation and what actions should be taken as a result. As an indication, to reduce the hours that the lights are switched off to between 1am and 6am, the £260,000 financial saving in the Council's business plan would be reduced by approximately £49,000 to £211,000. If the proposal were modified to reduce the hours of switch off to between 2am and 6am, the £260,000 financial saving in the Council's business plan would be reduced by approximately £98,000 to £162,000. These figures are summarised in table 2 for these two hours of potential change and clearly the figures would increase if the hours of additional lighting increase.

**Table 2**

<b>Switch off Proposal</b>	<b>Total Financial Saving</b>	<b>Reduction in Financial Savings</b>
<b>12am – 6am</b>	<b>£260,000</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>1am – 6am</b>	<b>£211,000</b>	<b>£49,000</b>
<b>2am – 6am</b>	<b>£162,000</b>	<b>£98,000</b>

- 6.4 Given the strength of feeling that has been expressed through the public consultation exercise, it is recommended that consideration be given to reducing the hours that the street lights are switched off. This, however, needs to be considered alongside the broader budget implications of not making this saving. Officers' recommendations therefore are to consider a reduction in the number of hours the street lights are switched off. Although it is recognised that the majority of respondents to the consultation would prefer the street lights to be kept on all night, it is considered that a more appropriate balance between budget pressures and the needs of communities would be to extent the lighting period by one or two hours to 1am or 2am. This would address many of the issues around the night time economy. In addition to this, it is also recommended that discussions continue with local councils on the potential to assist the County Council in funding the remaining hours that the lights are turned off and indeed, to give Councils the option of an earlier switch off time if that is what they would prefer. If Councils do decide to fund extra hours of lighting, clearly the precise terms under which that funding would be made available would need to be agreed.
- 6.5 If Members take this decision, the broader budget implications will need to be considered and in particular, where the additional savings will be found to allow the reduced switch off hours. One means of achieving this would be to extend the scope of the switch off period to all residential roads in the county (i.e. including those not on the CMS) over a five year period. Members may wish to consider whether this would be appropriate.

## **7. ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

#### **4.1 Developing the local economy for the benefit of all**

- Roads which have the highest use, traffic routes, will not have their operational times reduced.
- Streetlights in areas which support the night time economy will not have their operation times reduced

#### **4.2 Helping people live healthy and independent lives**

- Specific locations meeting an exception criteria will continue to be lit through the night:
  - Sites where there are a large number of conflicting traffic movements (e.g. roundabouts) which are on significant routes (generally those lit by columns greater than 6m high).
  - Sites where street lights are installed as a result of accident remedial measures.
  - Town centre areas where there is one or more of the following features: publicly maintained CCTV, areas of high crime risk confirmed by the Police, high proportion of high security premises such as banks, jewellers, high concentration of people at night such as transport interchanges and nightclubs.
  - Main approaches to town centre areas where there is a mix of development between residential and commercial/industrial (i.e. not exclusively residential).
  - Sites where the police can demonstrate that there is likely to be an increase in crime if the lights are switched off during part of the night.
  - Where there is a statutory requirement to provide lighting to illuminate obstructions in the highway, e.g. positions of traffic calming or mini roundabouts, etc.

#### **4.3 Supporting and protecting vulnerable people**

- The potential service changes are most likely to be perceived as not supporting or protecting vulnerable people who see streetlighting as an essential service where it has been provided. Further switching off or dimming is likely to be seen as adversely affecting their personal health and safety, although there is no evidence to support these fears from other authorities who have already implemented similar savings. A recent independent report published in the British Medical Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health on the impact of street lighting changes concluded the “study found little evidence of harmful effects of switch off, part-night lighting, dimming, or changes to white light/LEDs on road collisions or crime in England and Wales”.

### **5. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS**

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

## **5.1 Resource Implications**

- There are likely to be staffing and cost implications from the proposals as a result of enquiries and complaints from residents and communities and broader budget implications if the time of switch off changes will need to be considered.

## **5.2 Statutory, Risk and Legal Implications**

- Whilst the provision of streetlighting is not a statutory requirement, the safety of our highway network will remain our highest priority. Areas which have the highest risk of traffic related accidents or crime will not have their operational times reduced. Where specific locations meeting the exception criteria they will continue to be lit through the night (see 4.2 above).

## **5.3 Equality and Diversity Implications**

- The potential service changes are most likely to be perceived as negative by residents with the protected characteristics of age, disability or sex where streetlighting is seen as an essential service. Further switching off or dimming is perceived to adversely affect their personal health and safety, although there is no evidence to support these perceptions becoming reality from other authorities who have already implemented similar proposals. Evidence suggests that dimming the amount of light or switching to white light/LEDs may reduce crime in an area and when risks are carefully considered, local authorities can safely reduce street lighting, saving energy costs and reducing carbon emissions, without impacting negatively on traffic collisions and crime.
- Whilst the safety of our highway network will remain our highest priority, the largest proportion of our highway network is classified as residential where the standards of streetlighting is lower than on traffic routes. The potential changes to the level of service provided in these locations has the potential to impact on a large number of people, leaving them feeling more isolated, including the more vulnerable who rely on streetlighting to make them feel safe at night-time. There is however, no evidence to support these fears from other authorities who have already implemented similar savings. That evidence found there is a strong association in the minds of the public between the presence of lighting and a feeling of safety. However, the evidence suggests that despite this the introduction of part-night lighting won't change actual behaviour as other factors such as an area's reputation, personal feelings of vulnerability and time-specific circumstances (such as pub closing times) have a stronger influence.

## **5.4 Engagement and Consultation Implications**

- The proposal has been consulted with Local Councils, the Cambridgeshire Community Safety Partnership, the Cambridgeshire Constabulary, the University of Cambridge and the public.

## **5.5 Localism and Local Member Involvement**



- As the proposal impacts on all Local Members in relation to matters affecting their divisions, spokespersons from the Highways and Community Infrastructure Committee have been involved in the design of the consultation with local councils and the public.

## 5.6 Public Health Implications

- The potential service changes are most likely to affect those communities with the protected characteristics of age, disability or sex where streetlighting is seen as an essential service. Further switching off or dimming is perceived to adversely affect their personal health and safety, although there is no evidence to support these perceptions becoming reality from other Authorities who have had to implement similar savings.

Source Documents	Location
1. <i>The effect of reduced street lighting on road casualties and crime in England &amp; Wales: Controlled interrupted time series analysis</i> , Steinbach et al, Journal of Epidemial Community Health, 2015	<a href="http://jech.bmj.com/content/69/11/1118">http://jech.bmj.com/content/69/11/1118</a>
2. <i>Street lighting &amp; perceptions of safety survey November 2013: Results and analysis</i> , The Suzy Lamplugh Trust 2013	<a href="http://www.suzylamplugh.org/wpcms/wp-content/uploads/Perceptions-of-Safety-survey-FINAL.pdf">http://www.suzylamplugh.org/wpcms/wp-content/uploads/Perceptions-of-Safety-survey-FINAL.pdf</a>