

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Name of Committee Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of Committee 18th January 2007

Report Title Street Lighting Hours of Operation

Summary At present virtually all street lights in Warwickshire operate throughout the night. Savings would be made to the street lighting energy budget by switching off all (or selected) street lights after midnight. The report provides information on the options which might be considered.

For further information please contact Peter Samwell
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Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework? Yes/No

Background Papers None

CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:- *Details to be specified*

Other Committees

Local Member(s)
(With brief comments, if appropriate)

Other Elected Members Councillor K Browne)
Councillor Mrs E Goode) for information
Councillor Mrs J Lea)

Cabinet Member Councillor M Heatley – for information
(Reports to The Cabinet, to be cleared with appropriate Cabinet Member)

Chief Executive

Legal I Marriott - agreed

- Finance
- Other Chief Officers
- District Councils
- Health Authority
- Police
- Other Bodies/Individuals

FINAL DECISION **YES/NO** *(If 'No' complete Suggested Next Steps)*

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS :

Details to be specified

- Further consideration by this Committee
- To Council
- To Cabinet 22nd February 2007
- To an O & S Committee
- To an Area Committee
- Further Consultation

**Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee –
18th January 2007**

Street Lighting Hours of Operation

**Report of the Strategic Director for
Environment and Economy**

Recommendation

That the Committee supports:-

1. The proposal for switching off all (or selected) street lights after midnight, subject to risk assessments being carried out.
2. Trials to be carried out to check the effects of switching off selected lights particularly on levels of illumination.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The contract for street lighting energy is due for renewal in June 2007. The existing contract has been in operation since July 2005 and, although energy costs have fallen in the past few months, the present prediction is that the costs under a new contract may be about 30% higher than at present. This would increase the annual energy costs from about £1.3 million a year at present to about £1.7million a year.
- 1.2 A suggestion to save on energy costs is to switch off lights in the early hours of the morning. This initiative is being considered by a number of authorities in the UK. No authority appears to have started switching off lights although Essex have agreed to a trial which will start sometime in early 2007.
- 1.3 To switch lights off a new photocell is needed. There is a cost in purchasing and installing these and the cost is similar for all types of lights. There are a range of street lights in the County. The larger lights use more energy and, switching these off will save more money and, set against the cost of installing a new photocell, will give a quicker payback. The larger lights, which consume 40% of the electricity, will give a payback within 12 months and, for the remainder, the payback is between 12 and 28 months.

2. Options and Potential Savings

- 2.1 Options vary from switching off all 45,000 lights after midnight to switching off a percentage of lights to switching off lights in locations where there is little night time traffic. Some of the options and the estimated annual savings and first year expenditure are given below.
- 2.2 Estimated Savings and First year expenditure for switching off street lights after midnight.

Coverage	Amount of lights to be turned off	Estimated Annual Saving	Estimated First Year Expenditure
Whole network	100%	£740,000	£950,000
Whole network	50%	£370,000	£475,000
Whole network	33%	£246,000	£316,000
Traffic routes and industrial estates	100%	£106,000	£89,000
Traffic routes and industrial estates	50%	£53,000	£45,000
Traffic routes and industrial estates	33%	£35,000	£30,000

Note Traffic Routes and industrial estates tend to have the larger lights which consume most electricity

- 2.3 In addition to the financial savings reducing energy use will cut down on CO2 emissions and, during the period when lights are turned off, there will be a reduction in 'sky glow'.

3. Potential Disadvantages

- 3.1 It is known that street lights can help to reduce accidents and to reduce crime and fear of crime. They are also important where CCTV systems are operating to ensure that faces can be recognised on the recordings.
- 3.2 At present the exact link between street lights, accidents, crime and fear of crime in Warwickshire is not fully understood. It is known that only about 50% of the roads in Warwickshire are lit and that it is difficult to justify increasing the amount of street lighting, based on the estimated benefits, unless linked to an accident reduction scheme.
- 3.3 Among street lighting practitioners there is, nationally, a strong feeling that street lights should not be switched off but there is a degree of acceptance that light levels can be reduced, perhaps to 50% of normal levels, when traffic flows are low.

- 3.4 The view of Warwickshire Police is not yet known although a view expressed by a police representative at a recent street lighting conference was that lighting was clearly not needed if there were no people about and there were no policing issues to deal with.

4. Next Steps

- 4.1 If Members accept the principle of switching off street lights after midnight risk assessments would need to be carried out to check which lights could be turned off without adversely compromising safety. Checks would also be needed to see whether lights needed to be turned back on before daybreak (say from 7.00am). These assessments will need to take account of the views of Warwickshire Police and perhaps other interested parties.
- 4.2 Some trials will be required to check lighting levels if selected lights are turned off.
- 4.3 It is suggested that a wider consultation will be important before a full scale implementation of a switch off, to ensure that the views of the public are fully understood. This is particularly important in relation to the links between lighting and fear of crime.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 There are potentially substantial financial benefits from switching off street lights after midnight. Even if switching off all street lights is not acceptable, reducing lighting levels, perhaps by switching off 50% of lights, may well be possible.
- 5.2 Any switch off needs to be balanced against the potential disbenefits. Further investigation is required to check the links between light levels, accidents and crime.
- 5.3 Some small scale trials are initially needed to check lighting levels as a result of switching off selected street lights.
- 5.4 The views of the Police, the public and other interested parties will need to be ascertained.

JOHN DEEGAN
Strategic Director for Environment and Economy
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Warwick

29th December 2006