

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Name of Committee Nuneaton and Bedworth Area Committee

Date of Committee 25th July 2007

Report Title Street Lighting Hours of Operation - Consultation

Summary At present virtually all County Council street lights in Warwickshire operate throughout the night. Savings might be made if all (or selected) lights were switched off after midnight. Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee requested a consultation before further consideration is given to this issue. This report requests the views of Members of the Area Committee to switching off or dimming street lights.

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

CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:- *Details to be specified*

Other Committees Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 18th January 2007
All Area Committees July 2007

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

Other Elected Members

Cabinet Member
(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 Future report
- To an O & S Committee A report will be taken to the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the end of the consultation
- To an Area Committee
- Further Consultation

Nuneaton and Bedworth Area Committee - 25th July 2007

Street Lighting Hours of Operation - Consultation

Report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Economy

Recommendation

The views of the Members of the Area Committee are requested. In particular would Members support: lights being switched off in their area in the early hours of the morning or lights being dimmed in their area in the early hours of the morning (when this becomes a viable option); a trial of street light dimming in their area.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In the Nuneaton and Bedworth area the County Council is responsible for the street lights on the County roads throughout the area (excluding lights on trunk roads and motorways and some 'private' lights on housing estate paths).
- 1.2 In January this year the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report on the night time operation of the County Council street lights. Savings could be made to the street lighting energy budget by switching off all (or selected) street lights in the early hours of the morning. The resolution from the meeting is included as **Appendix A**. The resolution asks for a consultation to take place on the proposals.
- 1.3 In addition to savings to the budget there are potential environmental benefits from reducing energy use. Even though the County Council purchases green energy, reducing energy use will still reduce overall CO2 emissions.
- 1.4 This committee report asks for the views of the Members of the Area Committee on the night time operation of street lights. These views will be passed back to the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee along with the views of other consultees.

2. Switch-off Alternatives

- 2.1 To switch off lights in the night a new photocell is needed. The only photocell readily available at present will switch off lights between approximately midnight and five am.

- 2.2 Photocells could be installed on all lights or just selected lights. The whole network could be covered or just selected roads.
- 2.3 If traffic flows are low in the early hours, it is presumed that switching off selected lights (such as every other light) would have a low impact on road users. However, this option would have the same effect as dimming which is described in section 4. The drawback with photocells is that once installed the switch off cannot be halted unless the photocells are removed.

3. Switch-off Savings

- 3.1 Savings will depend on the number of lights that are switched off and the annual energy cost. Based on an annual cost of £1.5 million for energy and all lights switched off throughout the County the saving might be up to £650,000. This would equate to an average annual saving per light of £14.
- 3.2 There is a cost in purchasing and installing photocells and the cost is similar for all types of lights. 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 bigger 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.
- 3.3 It is estimated that carbon dioxide emissions will be reduced by approximately 6 tonnes for every £1000 of energy saved.

4. Dimming Street Lights

- 4.1 Since January officers have been made aware of an approach used in some other countries which involves dimming lights. The equipment, when installed, would allow lighting levels (and energy use) to be reduced in the early hours of the morning without lights being switched off. Assuming the system is developed to work in the UK, it is likely to become an option to consider in the future.
- 4.2 At present it is believed that the costs of installing and operating such a system will be greater than any reductions in energy costs, although it is presumed that this will change if the process becomes widely used. Officers have been told that, for a modest cost, it would be possible to organise a trial of the equipment, which would allow an assessment of the viability and acceptability of the system.
- 4.3 If the dimming process lives up to the claims of those promoting it, it would appear to be the best option for reducing lighting levels when it becomes viable.

5. Consultation Questions

- 5.1 Members are invited to give their views on the whether they would support the proposals to switch off street lights or to dim street lights in their areas and whether they would support a local trial of street light dimming. In considering these options Members may wish to consider the following consultation questions.

- (i) What concerns would you have if street lights were turned off in the early hours of the morning?
- (ii) What concerns would you have if street lights were dimmed in the early hours of the morning?
- (iii) If you have concerns:-
 - (a) Do they apply to the whole network or only specific areas (e.g. town centres, main traffic routes, residential areas etc)?
 - (b) Do they apply to every day of the week or only specific days (e.g. weekdays, weekends etc)?
 - (c) Do they apply to all members of the public or only certain groups (e.g. young people, old people, shift workers etc)?

JOHN DEEGAN
Strategic Director for Environment and Economy
Shire Hall
Warwick

3rd July 2007

Nuneaton and Bedworth Area Committee - 25th July 2007

Street Lighting Hours of Operation - Consultation

Resolution of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee 18th January 2007

1. Agreed that further consideration be given to the principle of a reduction of up to 50% in street lighting levels when traffic flows are low and in suitable locations.
2. Requests that the Police, Safer Neighbourhood Groups, CDRPs, local councils and residents (including older people and members of the Youth Parliament) are actively engaged in consultation before any reduction in street lighting hours of operation be implemented.
3. Requests that following the undertaking of appropriate risk assessments each Area Committee identify those lights for which the hours of operation could be reduced with a limited number in each area being identified for trials, following consultation with local Members.
4. Asks that the Officers:-
 - (a) Circulate the draft consultation document to all Members of the Committee before undertaking the consultation exercise.
 - (b) Following the consultation exercise report back to the Committee before reporting to Cabinet.