

From: Matthew Balfour, Cabinet Member – Environment and Transport
Barbara Cooper, Corporate Director – Growth, Environment and Transport

To: **Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee – 21 July 2015**

Decision No: **15/00066**

Subject: **Criteria for determining community requests for changes to current neighbourhood lighting**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Past Pathway of Paper: **This is the first meeting this paper has come to**

Future Pathway of Paper: **N/A**

Electoral Division: Countywide

Summary:

In November 2010, the County Council agreed the adoption of an amended street lighting policy to allow for the reduction in energy. Phase 1 of the Safe and Sensible Street Lighting project commenced in August 2013, and the County Council started to switch off identified surplus street lights at 68 sites. In December 2013, the County Council began converting approximately 60,000 street lights to Part-Night (PN) operation. Since implementing these measures the County Council has received a number of requests to return some street lights that are currently operating for part of the night, to all night lighting. This paper seeks to establish a transparent process for dealing with such requests in the future.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse, or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for the criteria for determining community requests for changes to current neighbourhood lighting as detailed within this paper.

1. Background

- 1.1 Kent County Council is one of the largest lighting authorities in the UK and has 118,000 street lights and some 25,000 lit signs and bollards. The current annual cost of illuminating and maintaining the stock is over £9.5m, a cost that keeps rising.
- 1.2 Measures were implemented to reduce the County Council's energy consumption through the Safe and Sensible Street Lighting (SSSL) project which introduced Trial Switch Off of Surplus Street Lights (Phase 1) and conversion of a significant number of street lights to Part Night Lighting (Phase

2). A report outlining these proposals was submitted to all Joint Transportation Boards during spring 2013.

- 1.3 In August 2013, the County Council began to implement Phase 1 of the project and started to switch off identified surplus street lights at 68 sites. In December 2013, the County Council began converting approximately 60,000 street lights to Part-night (PN) operation under Phase 2.
- 1.4 These measures were completed by autumn 2014 and have reduced annual energy costs by around £1m and carbon emissions by 5,000 tonnes.
- 1.5 Since implementing these measures the County Council has received a number of requests to return some street lights that are currently operating for part of the night, to all night lighting. This paper seeks to establish a transparent process for dealing with such requests in the future.

2 Streetlight Criteria

2.1 The approach implemented in Kent is similar to other local authorities. All street lights were considered suitable for conversion to PN operation unless they met one or more of the exclusion criteria listed below:

- Main routes with a significant night-time traffic record between midnight and 05.30am.
- Town centres.
- Areas identified by the Police as having an existing record of crime or having the potential for increased crime levels if the street lighting is changed.
- Areas with sheltered housing and other residences accommodating vulnerable people.
- Areas with operational emergency services site including hospitals and nursing homes.
- Formal pedestrian crossings, subways and enclosed footpaths and alleyways where one end links to a road that is lit all night.
- Where road safety measures are in place in the highway, such as roundabouts, central carriageways islands, chicanes, speed humps, etc.
- Roads that have local authority CCTV or Police surveillance equipment.
- Sites with existing or with potential road safety concerns.

2.2 Those street lights that met the criteria were excluded from the proposals. A wide variety of groups were consulted on these criteria in 2013 which included all County Councillors, Joint Transportation Boards (JTB), Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) and the public. The final criteria were also endorsed by the JTB's.

3 Review of Phases

Phase 1 – Trial switch offs

3.1 1,307 street lights had been identified within the County where lighting was considered as being surplus. If lighting of these locations was being considered

today, these lights would not have been installed. These are in excess of the current lighting standards and have a disproportionate maintenance cost due to their locations.

- 3.2 The identified street lights were proposed to be switched off for a period of 15 months. Crime levels and road safety are being monitored at each site throughout the trial period and street lights at sites being adversely affected will be switched back on. To date 278 street lights across 15 sites have been reverted back to either AN or PN operation as part of the County Council's continuous review. Street lights on unaffected sites will be reviewed at the end of the trial period to determine whether they will be permanently removed.
- 3.3 The review process for the affected sites is underway with the timetable included in appendix A. Each district's proposal will be presented at the appropriate Joint Transportation Board (JTB) for information only prior to being signed off by the Cabinet Member.

Phase 2 – Part-night (PN) lighting

- 3.4 Street lights identified for PN had a light sensor with a built in timer installed within it. This means that the street light would turn on automatically at dusk, turn off at approximately 12.00 midnight, turn back on at approximately 5.30a.m and stay on until first light (GMT). During British Summer Time hours the PN operation would start and finish an hour later as compared to the stated hours.
- 3.5 The review process for each district is due to start this summer with the timetable included in Appendix B. In the meantime, the County Council continues to monitor areas of PN operation and should criteria have been incorrectly applied, the converted assets may have AN lighting restored. Kent Police has made the County Council aware of only two sites where it was advised to revert back to AN operation and both have been restored.
- 3.6 Eight requests from County Councillors to revert streetlights back to AN operation have been actioned.

4 The Review process

- 4.1 The review process for both phases will involve consideration of the following:
 - Crime and anti-social behaviour issues
 - Road safety issues
 - Enquiries received following implementation
 - Other relevant issues (environmental, condition of columns, etc.)
- 4.2 The review process will analyse a range of data to determine a proposal which will include liaising with the following stakeholders:
 - Kent Police – it is worth reminding members that at the County Council Scrutiny Committee dated 19 May 2015, Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) Price explained that research conducted by the Kent Police had

shown that there was no direct correlation between crime and street lighting, with varying outcomes observed in different districts.

- Traffic Schemes and Member fund team
- Transport Intelligence team

As part of this process, the County Council has reviewed the current criteria relating to safety concerns.

- 4.3 Within Phase 2, the current criteria ensure that sites with existing or with potential road safety concerns are to operate under AN lighting. It is proposed that this is extended to include County Council owned footpaths where there may be safety concerns to Kent residents without AN operation. For example this could be due to a change of gradient (e.g. steps).
- 4.4 The County Council acknowledges that some alleyways are enclosed and may appear pitch black when operating under PN. While the current criteria under Phase 2 state that alleyways that link to a road under AN operation would remain lit, it is proposed to extend this beyond those identified locations should there be a potential safety concern
- 4.5 Areas requested as having potential safety concerns through PN operation will need to be assessed by a suitably nominated Highway Officer to determine the risk. Should a requested area be assessed to pose potential safety concerns, then the street lights should return to AN lighting. Request for lighting provision in locations that do not currently have street lights will not be considered under this criteria.
- 4.6 Should the Police advise that street lights should return to AN, they would contact the County Council. This is in accordance with the street light criteria, and any request would return to AN operation.

5 Process for requesting AN operation

- 5.1 Should an individual or group request a street light to be returned to AN operation, they will be asked to contact the street lighting team through the enquiries procedure. The request would have to include information as to why the criteria may have been incorrectly applied or the reasons to why the streetlight should return to AN operation.
- 5.2 The County Council will investigate the request to determine its validity and this may include the following:
 - Highway Officer to assess safety concerns
 - Request advice from the Police
- 5.3 If a request has been made by Kent Police, the County Council in line with the criteria will reverse the relevant street light to AN operation.
- 5.4 All requests will be assessed and subsequently signed off by the street lighting manager/relevant head of service.

5.5 It should be noted that the average cost of installing a PN cell within an individual street light was approximately £50 under the SSSL project. To reverse this process will involve the same procedure, however an AN cell would be installed. Whilst this is a small sum in isolation, this can quickly escalate if safe access to a lighting column is difficult or should there be a large number of requests.

6 Conclusions

6.1 Unless there is a request from Kent Police or a site is found to be unsafe without AN operation, approved changes should not be implemented until the installation of the new LED's with the accompanying Central Management System (CMS) has been completed. This would negate the cost of visiting each identified location under the current contract compared to using the CMS to make the changes instantly.

6.2 Any further changes to the criteria that are not detailed within this paper could be investigated prior to the agreement of the new street lighting policy that is to be drafted later this year.

6 Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse, or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for the criteria for determining community requests for changes to neighbourhood lighting as detailed within this paper.

7 Appendix

Appendix A – Phase 1 key dates
Appendix B – Phase 2 key dates
Appendix C – Proposed Record of Decision

8 Contact details

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Appendix A

Phase 1 Key Dates

District	Work largely complete	Review to begin	JTB
Ashford	Mar 2014	June 2015	Sept 2015
Canterbury	No trial switch off sites		
Dartford	Mar 2014	June 2015	Sept 2015
Dover	Aug 2013	Nov 2014	Sept 2015
Gravesham	Feb 2014	May 2015	Sept 2015
Maidstone	June 2014	Sept 2015	TBC
Sevenoaks	Sept 2014	Dec 2015	Sept 2015
Shepway	Mar 2014	June 2015	TBC
Swale	Sept 2014	Dec 2015	Mar 2016
Thanet	July 2014	Oct 2015	Dec 2015
Tonbridge and Malling	No trial switch off sites		
Tunbridge Wells	June 2014	Sept 2015	Jan 2015

Appendix B

Phase 2 Key Dates

District	Work largely complete	Review to begin
Ashford	May 2014	August 2015
Canterbury	June 2014	September 2015
Dartford	June 2014	September 2015
Dover	May 2014	August 2015
Gravesham	June 2014	September 2015
Maidstone	June 2014	September 2015
Sevenoaks	March 2014	June 2015
Shepway	May 2014	August 2015
Swale	June 2014	September 2015
Thanet	June 2014	September 2015
Tonbridge and Malling	April 2014	July 2015
Tunbridge Wells	February 2014	May 2015