

From: Matthew Balfour, Cabinet Member for Environment & Transport

Barbara Cooper, Corporate Director for Growth, Environment and Transport

To: **Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee – 12 February 2016**

Subject Decision No: 16/00018 - Proposed revision to the Street Lighting Policy

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Past Pathway of Paper: Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee on the 21 July 2015

Future Pathway of Paper: **Cabinet Member Decision**

Electoral Division: **All**

**Summary:**

Ahead of the roll out of the street light replacement programme the County Council has taken the opportunity to review its Street Lighting Policy. Part of this process included asking residents, Councils, Businesses and the Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations whether they would prefer All Night Lighting or Part Night Lighting. This paper outlines the consultation process, presents the results; and proposes changes to the Street Lighting Policy.

**Recommendation:**

The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse, or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport on the proposed decision to make changes to the Street Lighting Policy, including the introduction of optimised all night lighting (Option 3) as new LED streetlights are installed and commissioned on the Central Management System as attached at appendix E.

**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 £9m, a cost that keeps rising.
- 1.2 In December 2013, following a Members policy decision in 2011, the Authority began converting approximately 60,000 street lights (half of the stock) under the Safe and Sensible Street Lighting (SSSL) project, to part-night operation to reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions. These measures were completed by autumn 2014 and have reduced annual energy costs by around £1m and carbon emissions by 5,000 tonnes.

- 1.3 The Authority has recently awarded a 15 year contract to Bouygues E & S Infrastructure UK Ltd where all of its street lights will be converted to Light Emitting Diode (LED) products. Additionally a Central Management System (CMS) will be provided and this will enable complete management of street lighting including dimming, switch on/off, fault reporting, metering, etc.
- 1.4 This conversion works will reduce energy and Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC) costs by 60% and significantly reduce maintenance costs. The conversion works will cost around £40m and deliver a significant annual saving of up to £5.2m.
- 1.5 The benefits of CMS allow the Authority to manage its street light asset flexibly and provide suitable street lighting to Kent residents. Prior to the start of the conversion works it was proposed that the Authority review its Street Lighting policy.
- 1.6 A paper presented to the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee on 21 July outlined the consultation process that commenced on the 21 September 2015 and ran for 10 weeks until 30 November 2015.
- 1.7 This paper outlines the results of the consultation and recommends a revised street lighting policy.

## **2 Consultation Approach**

- 2.1 Working with Lake Market Research (Lake), the Authority consulted residents, Councils, Businesses and the Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations within Kent on the following options for the street lighting operation:
  - Option 1: Part night lighting - current level of service (12am to 5:30am)
  - Option 2: All night lighting
- 2.2 The questionnaire also asked for respondents' views on dimming street lights when roads and footways are less busy within the following periods:
  - Late evening, e.g. 8pm to midnight
  - Overnight, e.g. midnight to 5am
  - Early morning, e.g. 5am to 8am, if dark
- 2.3 The consultation resulted in 3,790 responses across the following groups:
  - 3,586 Individuals (accounting for 95% of the sample)
  - 43 members of KCC staff (accounting for 1% of the sample)
  - 82 representatives of District / Town / Parish Councils (accounting for 2% of the sample)
  - 14 Businesses (accounting for 0.4% of the sample)
  - 36 Voluntary or Community Sector Organisations (accounting for 1% of the sample)
  - 29 Others

- 2.4 The most popular method of responding to the consultation was via the online questionnaire, with only 11% providing their response via a paper questionnaire. Based on the estimated 600,000 households within the county, the number of responses received equates to a response rate of 0.6%. However compared to other public sector consultations, this represents a good level of response.
- 2.5 In addition to the consultation questionnaire, Lake Market Research arranged and facilitated a number of focus groups and deliberative groups.
- 2.6 The recruitment of these groups was carried out independently by Lake Market Research and those electing to take part were invited to take part in either a Workshop session or a focus group (if they met the criteria) by a telephone interviewing team. Residents were recruited according to gender and age profiles to ensure a good representation of residents at each session. A small number of residents who had expressed an interest in taking part via the questionnaire were invited to top up particular age groups and to replace any last minute cancellations to the groups.

#### *Workshop groups*

- 2.7 Workshop groups were held in Ashford, Tunbridge Wells and Ramsgate. These were selected on the basis of geographical spread, parking facilities, public transport access and value for money.
- 2.8 Those attending the resident workshop groups were from a mixed demographic profile to ensure a good spread of residents attending each session. The breakdown of attendees is seen below;

	Ashford	Ramsgate	Tunbridge Wells
Total Attending	32	34	32
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	15	21	16
Female	17	13	16
<b>Age</b>			
16-34	6	8	10
35-59	16	13	10
60+	10	13	12
<b>Social Grade</b>			
ABC1	21	19	22
C2DE	9	15	10
Refused	2	0	0

#### *Focus Groups*

- 2.9 Lake Market Research undertook specific research with shift workers, the elderly and University and College Students as these groups were identified as being particularly affected by the change in policy in 2011. Two focus groups for shift workers were run in Maidstone and Ashford and two focus groups were run for the elderly in Sevenoaks and Maidstone.

- 2.10 Shift workers attending the groups were from a mix of occupations including emergency services, care workers, engineers and taxi drivers; worked a 10 or 12 hour shift, with no set work patterns. Many left home or arrived home in the middle of the night.
- 2.11 The age of elderly participants ranged from their 70's through to mid-80's and were a mix of singles and married/couples.
- 2.12 Two roadshows were held to capture the views of passing students. The roadshows were held at The University of Kent, Canterbury campus and Mid Kent College in Maidstone and took the form of information provision and short discussions with interested parties.
- 2.13 Also identified within the EqIA was the impact on religious groups visiting their place of worship during the evening/night. Lake Market Research approached various Kent based religious organisations/venues with a view to being involved through a telephone interview focus group. Copies of the consultation document, posters and postcards, including email and telephone contact details were provided to encourage these communities to give their views on the consultation. However, no direct contact was received from these communities and the planned specific engagement activity was not undertaken.

#### *Media Approach*

- 2.14 To encourage responses throughout the county a comprehensive communications plan was created and included:
- Local newspaper advertising, media and press briefings
  - Awareness raising via KCC's various social media platforms and Facebook advertising
  - Heart Radio advertising and KCC Cabinet Member interview on BBC Kent
  - Back of bus advertising
  - Promotion via electronic roadside messages and bus signs
  - Distribution of 16,000 promotional postcards across Kent
  - Briefing pack provided to all 84 Kent County Council Members
  - KCC's Community Liaison Team and Community Wardens promoting the consultation at local forums and public meetings and to their networks.
  - Banner on the homepage of Kent.gov.uk and links to the consultation webpage from the main Street lighting webpage
  - Hard copies of the Consultation Document and Postcards at Libraries and Gateways around the county and advertised on Library and Gateway screens
  - Email with electronic copies of consultation material to partners (including Parish and Town Councils and Voluntary and Community Organisations) and stakeholder groups so that they can also raise awareness of the consultation.
  - Invite to those registered with KCC's Consultation Directory

- Email newsletter to Kent businesses (approx. 5,000 businesses) and engagement with the Chamber of Commerce.
- Feature in Kent Association of Local Councils newsletter.

### 3 Results

#### *Part night vs all night lighting*

3.1 63% of respondents indicated they prefer 'all night lighting' with 37% indicating they prefer 'part night lighting'. Individuals and Voluntary or Community Sector Organisations show the lowest preference for 'part night lighting' at 36% and 39% respectively. 62% of the District / Town / Parish Council's responding indicated they preferred 'part night lighting'.

3.2 For those preferring all night lighting, the following reasons were given:

- Feeling of safety
- Reduces Crime/anti-social behaviour
- Visibility
- Impact on specific populations

3.3 For those preferring part night lighting, the following reasons were given:

- Financial/other priorities
- Environment
- No Need
- No link to crime/reduces anti-social activity
- Alternative suggestions

3.4 The breakdown of the consultation results based on individual responses (3,586) throughout the county has been provided in Appendix A.

3.5 Apart from Tunbridge Wells, all other districts preferred a return to "all night lighting", with a high preference in the north and east of the county. It should be noted that areas within Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells have had part night lighting for the past 40 years.

#### *Dimming*

3.6 The second part of the consultation sought views on whether to dim at periods when the roads are less busy.

3.7 The results also show that a majority of respondents are prepared to accept (reducing illumination levels overnight as detailed below. Dimming across the other periods of time was not supported. A breakdown of responses is detailed in Appendices B and C.

#### *Deliberative groups*

3.8 While the deliberative groups showed some variance compared to the main consultation in terms of preference for all night Lighting and part night Lighting,

it did highlight similar qualitative comments as seen within the open consultation process. However, it was clear that some attendees were confused by the options presented to them and saw Part Night Lighting including dimming as an option, as well as those selecting All Night Lighting (also wanting dimming), and some liked the idea in principle of Part Night Lighting, but wanted different timings.

- 3.9 There was a general consensus from the discussion groups do indicate that people see All Night Lighting and dimming as the 'happy medium for cost savings and providing the level of light'.
- 3.10 The focus groups with Shift Workers showed a strong preference for All Night Lighting, with an element of dimming to also help to save money and provide 'a level of light'.
- 3.11 The focus groups with the Elderly showed less of consensus with some individuals wanting Part Night Lighting and others preferring All Night Lighting. Some felt happy with the concept of dimming, while others were very against this. This group tended to favour Part Night Lighting as many did not venture out during the midnight to 5am period.
- 3.12 The roadshows undertaken with University and College students showed a mix of preferences, with findings showing that the majority (over half) preferred the option of All Night Lighting; and this was mainly due to personal safety concerns; while just over a third shared a preference for the option of Part Night Lighting and the remainder were undecided.

#### *Consultation Report*

- 3.13 The Consultation Report with full details of the process undertaken can be found within at Appendix D.

## **4 Options**

**From the results of the consultation process, 3 options are identified:**

### *Option 1 - Part Night Lighting*

- 4.1 To maximise the savings required within this service, the Authority could continue with turning off streets lights for part of the night. Due to the benefits of CMS, an analysis of the current exclusion criteria could enable changes that expand the criteria for those lights that are lit all night or alternatively amend the hours of operation.
- 4.2 The technology has the ability to amend the period of time of when part night lighting starts. For example, locations such as train stations could be extended beyond the current switch off time of 12am to allow commuters on the last train home to have some light as they depart the station. Furthermore the current exclusion criteria could be extended to light all alleyways or any other area deemed necessary.

- 4.3 This would enable the Authority to meet its savings targets of £5.2m at a time when the Authority is facing difficult challenges with its overall budget.

#### *Option 2 - All Night Lighting*

- 4.4 Due to the implementation of the LED, the Authority can provide all night lighting at a more affordable cost as compared to the current assets. The Authority currently saves £1m by switching the lights off from 12am – 5am across residential areas. LED's consume 60% less energy than conventional street lights, and as a result it would cost £400k to turn the lights back on during this period.

#### *Option 3 – Optimised All Night Lighting*

- 4.5 However, the Authority still needs to look for savings and can reduce this figure should they profile the levels of illumination to both maximise highway safety and minimise disturbance to residents when the roads are less busy. We estimate a return to all night lighting would cost a maximum of £240k per annum.
- 4.6 This additional cost can be minimised through working with our appointed contractor - Bouygues - to analyse optimum lighting levels throughout the street light operating period. This approach should address the concerns of individuals, parishes and districts who support retaining part night lighting, whilst also being a source of reassurance for those that support all night lighting

## **5 Summary of responses**

- 5.1 The consultation has shown that the majority of the respondents to the consultation want a return to all night lighting.
- 5.2 It was clear throughout the consultation process that whilst the majority of respondents want a level of all night lighting, they also understand the cost savings that have to be achieved by the Authority.
- 5.3 While all night lighting could significantly reduce the required savings (£5.2m) expected throughout this project, there is scope to minimise this effect by working with Bouygues to optimise illumination levels throughout streetlight operation. This can be achieved through analysing the system on a street by street level, as each road has its own design specification which will enable different optimal illumination levels.

## **6 Preferred option**

- 6.1 It is recommended that Option 3, an 'optimised' all night lighting, is introduced once LED lighting and the CMS is installed, thereby meeting both the concerns of our communities, and our challenging savings targets. This will be delivered in conjunction with the Authority's appointed contractor - Bouygues. This will reduce the additional cost of returning to all night lighting.
- 6.2 The Authority has agreed a proposed programme with Bouygues for delivery of the LED project. It will take 14 months to complete the residential areas, so

dependent on where the individual district is within the programme; will determine when the new policy will be implemented. The draft programme for the residential areas and approximate timeline is as follows:

- Phase 1 – Ashford, Shepway and Dover – March to July 16
- Phase 2 – Sevenoaks, Dartford and Gravesham – July to September 16
- Phase 3 – Tunbridge Wells, Tonbridge & Malling and Maidstone – September to November 16
- Phase 4 – Swale, Canterbury and Thanet – November 16 – May 17

6.3 Whilst it is hope that the vast majority of residents will support this policy, it is accepted that there may be some areas that would like to alter the pattern of the lighting levels. It is proposed that in these instances such requests should be made by Parish Councils and/or District Councils which are then taken to the relevant Joint Transportation Board (JTB). The JTB will consider these requests and make a recommendation to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport.

## **7. Recommendation:**

The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse, or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport on the proposed decision to make changes to the street lighting Policy, including the introduction of optimised all night lighting (Option 3) as new LED streetlights are installed and commissioned on the Central Management System as attached at appendix E.

## **8. Background Documents**

Equalities Impact Assessment – Street Lights Options Review

## **9. Contact details**

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