

Safe and Sensible Street Lighting Project - Review of Trial Switch-Off – Dover District

Date of Review:

Sites originally proposed for inclusion in the trial switch-off but subsequently withdrawn:

East Kent Access Location B

East Kent Access Location C

A256 By-Pass – Right Turn Lane Venson

A256 By-Pass – Right Turn Lane Tilmanstone

A256 By-Pass – Right Turn Lane Eythorne

Sites originally proposed for inclusion in the trial switch-off but subsequently modified to part-night lighting:

East Kent Access Location A – Sandwich by-pass (22 lights)

East Kent Access Location D – Monks Way (23 lights)

East Kent Access Location E – Ramsgate Road (56 lights)

East Kent Access South – Ramsgate Road (6 lights)

Sites included in the trial switch-off:

Whitfield Hill (31 lights)

A258 Sandwich By-Pass – Sandwich Road (28 lights)

Betteshanger Road (24 lights)

Folkestone Road, Farthingloe (61 lights)

Site location	Whitfield Hill	Remarks
No. of lights switched off	31	-
No. of lights converted to part night	0	-
Lights switched off/ converted (DATE)	22/08/2013	-
Police: crime and anti-social behaviour issues Period: August 2013 - December 2014	19/12/13 - Theft from Motor Vehicle (Lorry in Layby) 03.00.	-
Police remarks	Lack of street lighting could have contributed to the crimes but this has not been highlighted as a major contributory factor. The theft from M/V on Whitfield Hill was against a lorry in the layby overnight, the theft in Ash was against unsecure flats which were under construction near the junction.	Trial switch off has not had an adverse impact.
Crashes	SLIGHT - 23.00 DARK. WET. Single vehicle lost control. SLIGHT - 16.40 LIGHT. DRY. V1 hit rear of V2.	The absence of lighting at this site has not led to an increase in crashes. The only crashes recorded since switch-off were not lighting-related.
Traffic Schemes remarks	This section of road historically has had a poor safety record with emergency run-off lanes for larger vehicles going downhill. Permanent switch-off should be approached with extreme caution and maybe part-time lighting would be a better option.	Comments noted: this was considered prior to the switch-off. The trial has not shown that this is a hazardous site.
Enquiries received following implementation (site)	2/9/13 Reporter enquiring about trial in response to local resident concerned about highway safety.	Concentration of enquiries in the early months, but since then far fewer enquiries have been received, indicating perhaps that residents are largely accepting

<p>specific)</p>	<p>9/9/13 Resident. Supportive but concerned about visibility of escape lane.</p> <p>9/9/13 Resident concerned about safety of pedestrians using footway, feels lights should be on until at least 11 pm.</p> <p>9/9/13 Resident concerned about busy road and lack of lighting, would be satisfied with part-night lighting.</p> <p>Other representations made at this time by local Members.</p> <p>10/9/13 Resident concerned about visibility of verge, sharp bend and escape lane. Red reflectors distracting.</p> <p>11/9/13 Resident concerned that lights are not working and that area near escape lane is dangerous. Noted pedestrians using torches.</p> <p>13/9/13 District Councillor on behalf of several concerned residents who had understood lights would be off between midnight and 5.30 am.</p> <p>1/10/13 Resident and child had to use footway at 11:30 pm following car breakdown; fell and sprained ankle due to uneven surface and lack of lighting., also concerned by volume and speed of traffic.</p> <p>11/10/13 Resident who regularly drives this road commenting that the lack of light was difficult at first but that the reflective strips help, and they now find the lack of light manageable.</p> <p>23/12/13 Residents concerned that the trial switch-off has</p>	<p>of the change.</p>
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	<p>not taken into consideration the number of vehicles and pedestrians using Whitfield Hill or its history of crashes and suggesting the lights should be switched back on for safety reasons.</p> <p>23/1/14 Resident perplexed that lights on Whitfield Hill have been switched off when some nearby are on day and night - advised the latter are Dover DC lights awaiting repair.</p> <p>22/4/14 Resident enquiring about the trial switch-off.</p> <p>17/11/14 Resident reporting lights not working - advised of trial switch-off, but feels it is dangerous.</p> <p>6/1/15 Resident who cycles along Whitfield Hill regularly concerned about safety.</p> <p>9/1/15 Resident enquiring about the trial switch-off.</p>	
Street Lighting	Structural assessment: 3 nr. columns scheduled for re-testing/possible replacement by 2016; 28 nr. in acceptable condition, scheduled for re-testing in 2019.	Although most columns appear in acceptable condition, 26 of the 31 columns are estimated to be over 30 years old and hence past the end of their expected lifespan.
Highway Operations	No issues raised.	-
Developments	No issues raised.	-
Other relevant issues	None.	-
Has the trial switch-off had an adverse impact?	YES	NO ✓
Options and financial implications	Option	Cost over 15 years

	Switch back on immediately (converting to LED in due course)	£54,450
	Convert to LED in due course, then switch back on	£53,700
	Remove columns	£22,500
Remarks	<p>The trial switch-off has not led to an increase in crashes or a significant increase in crime, and although several residents initially expressed concerns about the trial, the reduction in enquiries over time suggests that Kent's residents are now largely accepting of the switch-off.</p> <p>Most of these columns are at the end of their lifespan, and removing them immediately will result in savings to Kent County Council of around £32,000 over the next 15 years, with further savings in the longer term. Taking this into consideration, it is recommended that these columns be removed.</p>	
Recommendation	Remove columns.	
JTB Remarks	<p>Councillor G Cowan expressed surprise that it was proposed to remove columns on Whitfield Hill. Before 2013 there had been fatalities there, and a couple of cars had recently ended up in the roadside hedge.</p> <p>Councillor M R Eddy stressed that an improved maintenance regime was needed for road markings and reflectors if there was to be no lighting.</p> <p>Councillor MJ Ovenden asked if the lights in the vicinity of the houses could be retained and switched back on.</p>	
Response to JTB Remarks	<p>Officers advised at the meeting that there were always a number of factors involved in any road traffic accident. For each site the team had considered whether lighting was a contributory factor, but they undertook to review this site.</p> <p>The RTC data has been reviewed and there is no indication that changed lighting conditions has adversely affected type or frequency of incident. Generally RTC's in this road relate to driver behaviour.</p> <p>Officers advised that maintenance work had been carried out in 2013 on road studs and reflectors, and that additional markers could be installed to help motorists maintain a visual line. However, beyond that there was no special maintenance regime for unlit roads.</p>	

	<p>In response to Councillor M J Ovenden, officers agreed to review whether lights in the vicinity of houses could remain in place.</p> <p>There are no safety reasons why these two lights should be retained.</p> <p>In response to Members who suggested cats’ eyes to replace reflector strips on columns, officers undertook to investigate these whilst highlighting their relatively high cost.</p> <p>The investigation considered two options, road studs installed at 18m centres on both sides of the road and installation of a verge marker post to replace each of the lighting columns to be removed.</p> <p>Road studs would provide a better solution overall by making both existing edge lines more visible in darkness, would be cheaper but may require greater traffic management to install.</p> <p>Marker posts would only be provided on one side of the road, so would be less effective, would be more expensive, but can be installed at the time the existing columns are removed within the same traffic management arrangements.</p> <p>It is thus intended to install road studs unless the traffic management requirements prove to be too expensive. In which case marker posts will be installed.</p> <p>Officers also agreed to look at reflectors for the escape lane.</p> <p>The escape lane has two signs in advance of it. The carriageway markings are in good condition and there appears, from Google, to be three black & white bollards which have reflectors on them. The bollards, which are plastic and collapse on impact, are there to prevent road users inadvertently driving into the gravel. These existing arrangements appear to provide sufficient awareness of the escape lane.</p>
<p>Final JTB Comments</p>	<p>Councillor T A Bond stated that around 10,000 houses were due to be built in Whitfield and surrounding areas which meant that Whitfield Hill would be heavily used in the coming months and years. Kent County Council had spent more than £2,000 on the consultation which was what would be saved each year by switching off these lights. He was of the view that the lights should remain. Councillor G Lymer urged KCC to retain the lights. There had been fatal and serious injury accidents on Whitfield Hill during the last 5 to 10 years. The route was frequently used by night-shift workers at the industrial zone. He expressed concerns that the lorry escape route was on the bend next to the footpath. With no lighting on this bend, it was an accident waiting to happen. When viewed against the</p>

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	<p>cost of each road fatality at £1 million, the minimal savings that would be achieved by switching off the lights were simply not worth it.</p> <p>In response to Councillor G Cowan, the SLAM confirmed that reflective markers would be installed. Councillor Cowan stated that he could not support the proposal which would put people’s lives at risk and save only £2,000 per annum over 15 years.</p>		
<p>Cabinet Committee Remarks</p>			
<p>Final Recommendation</p>			
<p>Cabinet Member Decision</p>		<p>Date</p>	

Site location	A257 Ash By-Pass - Sandwich Road	Remarks
No. of lights switched off	28	-
No. of lights converted to part night	0	-
Lights switched off/ converted (DATE)	23/08/2013	-
Police: crime and anti-social behaviour issues Period: August 2013 - December 2014	18/1/14 - Theft from property 03.00.	-
Police remarks	Lack of street lighting could have contributed to the crimes but this has not been highlighted as a major contributory factor.	Noted.
Crashes	SLIGHT - 09.11 LIGHT.DRY. V2 pulled out into path V1.	The absence of lighting at this site has not led to an increase in crashes. The only crash recorded since switch-off was not lighting-related.
Traffic Schemes remarks	Lights have been retained at junctions along the A256 and also at the A257/Guilton junction, so it is not clear why a different approach should have been taken at these junctions.	Comments noted: junctions along the A256 were originally proposed for inclusion in the trial switch-off but were withdrawn in response to political sensitivities.
Enquiries received following implementation (site specific)	13/1/14 Resident concerned that bus no longer goes into Ash village but sets passengers down on by-pass where lights are switched off - advised to contact bus company.	-
Street Lighting	Structural assessment: all columns in acceptable condition, scheduled for re-testing in 2019.	Columns appear to be in acceptable condition, and according to installation dates have at least 10 years left until the end of their lifespan.
Highway Operations	No issues raised.	-

Developments	No issues raised.	-	
Other relevant issues	None.	-	
Has the trial switch-off had an adverse impact?	YES	NO	✓
Options and financial implications	Option	Cost over 15 years	
	Switch back on immediately (converting to LED in due course)	£61,460	
	Convert to LED in due course, then switch back on	£60,760	
	Remove columns	£28,000	
Remarks	<p>The trial switch-off has not led to an increase in crime or crashes, and other than a single enquiry relating to the bus service, Kent’s residents have not commented on these lights being switched off, suggesting that there is no need to continue providing lighting to this part of the highway.</p> <p>These columns, although in acceptable condition, are likely to need replacing during the next 15 years, so removing them immediately will result in savings to Kent County Council of around £33,000 over this period, with further savings in the longer term. Taking this into consideration, it is recommended that these columns be removed.</p>		
Recommendation	Remove columns.		
JTB Remarks	<p>Councillor P I Carter raised concerns about agricultural workers using the road in darkness.</p> <p>Cllr Ridings commented that since switch off he had received no enquiries / concerns about this site.</p>		
Response to JTB Remarks	Officers clarified that there are several unlit junctions on this road, a number of which incorporate a right turn facility.		
Final JTB Comments	<p>In respect of the A257 Ash By-Pass, Councillor S S Chandler commented that lighting made no difference to what was a bad junction. However, Councillor Cowan disagreed, arguing that it was not worth removing columns to save such small amounts of money, particularly when LED replacements would offer further savings in the long term. Councillor M R Eddy agreed, stating that lights were most definitely needed at the junction if it were used by</p>		

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	agricultural workers who were unfamiliar with the roads and/or conditions.		
Cabinet Committee Remarks			
Final Recommendation			
Cabinet Member Decision		Date	

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Site location	Betteshanger Road	Remarks
No. of lights switched off	24	-
No. of lights converted to part night	0	-
Lights switched off/ converted (DATE)	22/08/2013	-
Police: crime and anti-social behaviour issues Period: August 2013 - December 2014	None reported.	-
Police remarks	None.	-
Crashes	None reported.	The absence of lighting at this site has not led to an increase in crashes.
Traffic Schemes remarks	Hadlow College are intending to move in to Betteshanger Business Park, so it may be advisable to just retain temporary switch off, rather than permanent column removal.	Comment noted.
Enquiries received following implementation (site specific)	None received.	-
Street Lighting	Structural assessment: all columns in acceptable condition, scheduled for re-testing in 2019.	All of the columns at this site have at least 20 years until the end of their expected lifespan.
Highway Operations	No issues raised.	-
Developments	No issues raised.	-

Other relevant issues	None.	-
Has the trial switch-off had an adverse impact?	YES	NO ✓
Options and financial implications	Option	Cost over 15 years
	Switch back on immediately (converting to LED in due course)	£17,375
	Convert to LED in due course, then switch back on	£16,750
	Remove columns	£12,500
Remarks	<p>Although there has been no increase in crime or crashes since switch-off, and Kent's residents have not commented on these lights being switched off, the likelihood of increased traffic linked to the Hadlow College proposals suggests that there may be a future need to provide lighting to this part of the highway.</p> <p>As the columns at this site are less than half-way through their expected lifespan, they are unlikely to need replacing within the next 15 years, so the cost of continuing to run them over this period would be only around £5,000 more than the cost of removing them. Taking this into consideration, it is recommended that the trial be extended until the columns are fitted with LED lanterns as part of the roll-out of the LED project.</p>	
Recommendation	Convert to LED in due course, then switch back on.	
JTB Remarks	Members raised no objection to the recommendation.	
Final JTB Comments	<p>Councillor Bond and Councillor P Walker commented that it made no sense to keep the lights off at Betteshanger Road when the district was trying to attract investment for growth and regeneration. Councillor S C Manion disagreed, stating that there was no sense in keeping the lights on while the road was not in use. Councillor Lymer supported the proposal, arguing that it was an unused road and taxpayers' money should be saved where possible. Councillor Cowan believed the columns should be fitted with LED lights and switched on immediately. Councillor Eddy concurred, pointing out that it would cost only around £1,200 to switch all of the lights back on. To attract business to the area, the lights should be switched back on as soon as possible.</p>	

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Cabinet Committee Remarks			
Final Recommendation			
Cabinet Member Decision		Date	

Site location	Folkestone Road, Farthingloe	Remarks
No. of lights switched off	61	-
No. of lights converted to part night	0	-
Lights switched off/ converted (DATE)	23/08/2013	-
Police: crime and anti-social behaviour issues Period: August 2013 - December 2014	10/5/14 - Burglary from dwelling 00.00. 11/3/14 - Burglary Other 21.00.	-
Police remarks	Lack of street lighting could have contributed to the crimes but this has not been highlighted as a major contributory factor.	Noted.
Crashes	SERIOUS 23.10. DARK. WET. Foreign vehicle assumed Dual Carriageway, drove on wrong side of road.	Confirmation from police separately that absence of lighting was not a contributory factor. The absence of lighting at this site has not led to an increase in crashes.
Traffic Schemes remarks	There is an on carriageway cycle lane within the 40mph limit. It is very possible that the Safety Audit for the original cycle scheme depended on the presence of street lighting, and so the removal of lighting would need a similar such sign-off from an accredited safety audit assessment team.	Whilst we are not aware of any issues during the period of switch-off, it would seem sensible to retain those 6 columns within the 40mph zone and restore lighting to the cycleway.
Enquiries received following implementation (site specific)	27/8/13 Resident concerned that lack of lighting is a hazard to highway users. 14/5/14 Police officer investigating crash (see above), requesting details of lighting in this area, which were provided. 21/11/14 local business (farm) concerned about	Noted.

	<p>increasing levels of fly-tipping, would prefer lights to be on or part-night.</p> <p>19/12/14 MP on behalf of disabled resident whose car broke down in unlit area and who feels lack of lighting is dangerous and lights should be switched back on.</p>		
Street Lighting	<p>Structural assessment: 58 nr. columns likely to need replacement in around 2 years; 3 nr. in acceptable condition, scheduled for re-testing in 2019.</p> <p>Highway Operations: no issues raised.</p> <p>Developments: no issues raised.</p>		<p>These columns are all nearing the end of their expected lifespan, and are estimated to need replacement or removal within 5 years.</p>
Highway Operations	No issues raised.		-
Developments	No issues raised.		-
Other relevant issues	None.		-
Has the trial switch-off had an adverse impact?	YES		NO ✓
Options and financial implications	Option		Cost over 15 years
	Switch back on immediately (converting to LED in due course)		£114,395
	Convert to LED in due course, then switch back on		£112,870
	Remove columns		£45,750
Remarks	<p>The trial switch-off has not led to an increase in crashes, and where crimes have been reported the police have not identified lack of lighting as a significant factor, whilst the small number of enquiries received suggest that Kent's residents are largely accepting of the switch-off.</p>		

	<p>Reviewing the site, six of the columns are within the 40 mph speed limit, where they light the cycle lane. To address the safety concerns raised by officers and emphasise the start of the speed limit, it is recommended that these lights be switched back on, and the columns fitted with LED lanterns in due course.</p> <p>All 61 columns are all at the end of their lifespan, so will need replacing within the next 15 years. Removing 55 of them immediately will result in savings to Kent County Council of around £62,000 over that period, with further savings in the longer term. It is thus recommended that the columns outside the 40 mph speed limit be removed.</p>
<p>Recommendation</p>	<p>Switch six columns within 40 mph speed limit back on immediately (converting to LED in due course). Remove remaining columns.</p>
<p>JTB Remarks</p>	<p>Councillor Cowan commented that there had been two burglaries at the farm shop immediately after the switch-off. He had therefore requested that a small number of columns around the farm shop be switched back on.</p> <p>Councillor N J Collor agreed, adding that the Farthingloe development would be considerably bigger than development taking place at Betteshanger, and advised that the KCC development team have details of the proposals.</p>
<p>Response to JTB Remarks</p>	<p>Officers undertook to review the reinstatement of five columns around the farm shop.</p> <p>The farm complex and a small number of residential properties are located some way from the end of the trial switch off. Restoring lights in isolation for these properties would create a short length of darkness which is hazardous to road users. To overcome this approximately 20 lights would need to be retained and switched back on. The farm shop that was burgled is located within the farm complex and not directly adjacent to the highway so any benefit from street lighting is minimal. The lighting is intended to light the highway and whilst there are some benefits to others nearby it would be an expensive exercise to retain these lights to provide security for private property.</p> <p>In respect of the development proposals, officers added that Farthingloe was likely to require significant improvements and changes to the road network in order to provide an access to the new development. The development access layout is most unlikely to incorporate use of the existing lights. At Betteshanger the road is relatively new, the alignment straightforward meaning that there is a good chance that the Hadlow development may be able to use existing lights. Officers undertook to consult the development team.</p> <p>The development team have advised that the proposals have received outline approval but that this is subject to a judicial review. The proposals included two junctions onto Folkestone Road with no properties directly fronting</p>

	<p>Folkestone Road. The proposals for these junctions confirm the officer’s remarks that the use of existing street lighting would be most unlikely.</p>		
<p>Final JTB Comments</p>	<p>Councillor Cowan commented that he could not accept lights being switched off in the built-up area at Farthingloe. He corrected comments attributed to him in the report, advising that it was houses that had been burgled and not the farm shop. In his view, there were sixteen columns in total that were crucial and should be switched back on, these being all the columns from the 40mph zone to columns GAP 83 and 82. He was not asking for all the lights to be switched back on and, indeed, was content for those columns heading towards Capel to be removed. Councillor Lymer agreed but argued that all the lights should be retained due to the large development at Farthingloe.</p> <p>Councillor Eddy reminded Members that the Campaign to Protect Rural England was litigating against Dover District Council to try to prevent the Farthingloe development. However, should the development go ahead, the columns would need to be reinstated. Due to measures on the A20, Folkestone Road was currently being heavily used by traffic entering and exiting the town. In his view all the columns should be retained. Several Members agreed, arguing that it would be nonsensical to remove all the columns, knowing that they might have to be reinstated for the Farthingloe development which would see over 500 houses built.</p>		
<p>Cabinet Committee Remarks</p>			
<p>Final Recommendation</p>			
<p>Cabinet Member Decision</p>		<p>Date</p>	