



Cambridge City Council Item

To: Leader of the Council
Report by: Liz Bisset, Director of Customer and Community Services
Relevant scrutiny committee: STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE
13 JULY 2015
Wards affected: ALL WARDS

Street Lighting – County Council Proposals

Not a key decision

1. Executive summary

- 1.1. Following major budgetary reviews, the County Council proposes to dim street lighting, and to turn off lights in a number of areas across the County overnight, with midnight to 6am the current proposed hours.
- 1.2. The proposals will have a significant impact in the City, not least on community safety. Both County Council and City Council recognise the need to meet together on the proposals, and discuss options on the County's planned implementation, whilst recognising the need at the County Council to identify savings and deliver against budget pressures.
- 1.3. The City Council has raised a number of concerns around the safety of the public if the planned lighting goes through as currently proposed. Residents, visitors, our large student population and workers from entertainment establishments walk and cycle home late at night, including through the green spaces which are well used walking and cycling routes even at night. There are also concerns around the high risk areas for crime and anti-social behaviour, particularly related to the vibrant night time economy. These areas are served by CCTV and, the impact of dimmed or switched off lighting in these areas would have a detrimental effect on the operations of the cameras.

- 1.4. This report sets out the framework of the lighting proposal and details the areas of significant concern in the City and suggests considerations for negotiation with the County Council.
- 1.5. An initial meeting has been arranged with the county council before the Committee meets, but after the deadline for reports and any progress at that meeting will be reported to Committee.

2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor is recommended to work with the County Council on options to minimise the impact of the changes, and approve a formal response by the City Council to the County Council following input by Committee, and seek:

- 2.1. A timeframe and effective method for public consultation on the lighting proposals being put forward by the County Council and agreement to undertake consultation jointly with the County Council.
- 2.2. Further views from the city's police and any additional recommendations on overnight street lighting, and also the views of other key stakeholders including our two Universities and central city businesses.
- 2.3. County Council agreement to remove streets from dimming or switching off where CCTV is located.
- 2.4. The removal from the proposal of walking and cycling routes, particularly across open spaces.
- 2.5. Changes to the timing and scope of the proposed switch off to take into account the needs of city centre life and the night-time economy.

3. Background

- 3.1. As a result of a major review of budgets Cambridgeshire County Council have proposed turning off street lights in certain areas across the County from midnight to 6a.m. and dimming lights in other areas. Lighting on main roads is planned to continue through the night. They are committed to savings of £274k countywide

initially across 2015/16 and 2016/17. However, since starting our discussions with the County Council they have confirmed that they are deferring the implementation of the proposal until April 2016 and therefore there will be no saving in 2015/16 other than those made by the current dimming arrangements. The deferment will enable a period of consultation with all Local Authorities affected by the proposal across the County as well as further discussion with the police.

3.2. The proposal is incorporated into the County Council's current Business Plan and has been approved by their full Council. In a letter to Cllr. Lewis Herbert the Leader of the County Council states that;

- As part of the street lighting renewal project, the County Council have introduced a new management system, which allows them to vary the lighting levels and timings of individual lights remotely. Not all county street lights are on the central management system and, for those that are not (mainly in more remote villages), it is not cost effective to switch these off. However, the vast majority of the County's street lights are on the system and these total 38,386, some 77% of the total stock, of which 10,398 are within Cambridge City, the rest being mainly in market towns and larger villages around the county.

3.3. The County Council have been unable to specify the level of savings that would result from dimming and overnight switch off within Cambridge City. However, they offered reassurance that they were treating all parts of the network on the system equally. The 10,398 streetlights in Cambridge City represent 21% of the County Council's total street lighting across Cambridgeshire, or 27% of those on the Central Management System. These figures could be used as a benchmark to ensure the city does not take a disproportionate share of the savings.

3.4. The City Council recognises the budget pressures that the County Council are under and the need to identify savings. However, the specific nature of City life and public safety needs to be considered.

Both the City Council and County Council representatives acknowledge that the proposals to switch off street lighting in the city will have a significant impact, not least on community safety. For this reason the City Council wants to work with the County to achieve change to the implementation of this proposal. Some of the concerns that have been raised are:

- we have a large student and young population living in the city centre who walk and cycle home late at night, including significant numbers after midnight particularly between 12pm and 1am;
- green spaces in the city have well used walking and cycling routes even at night;
- we have community safety hotspot and CCTV areas that need to be well lit;
- the timing and scope of areas to be switched off from midnight needs to take account of city centre life and the night-time economy, and also the need for a range of workers who leave in the hour before 6am who also need street lighting.

3.5. The County Council have given us draft plans of their lighting proposal to enable our discussions with them and our local knowledge will assist with the re-categorisation of a number of the roads by the County Council. Detailed plans will be made publically available as the proposal is developed and agreement on possible alternatives have been reached. At that stage the County will be in a position to provide costs to the different options.

3.6. City Council officers have looked at the proposal and consulted with the CCTV Operations Manager and the Neighbourhood Policing Manager and concerns have been raised around specific areas in relation to hotspot crime areas, the effective operation of CCTV both permanent and re-deployable and the general safety and perception of safety of residents and visitors.

3.7. Permanent CCTV

Permanent CCTV cameras are located in the hotspot areas of the night time economy, residential areas and shopping precincts, where the risk of anti-social behaviour and crime are highest. Reduction of lighting in these areas would seriously reduce or

remove CCTV's capability to observe and identify incidents, offenders and escaping offenders and the ability to gather useable evidence. It might also affect power supplies to a number of cameras making them unworkable. A reduction in the capability of the cameras due to the removal or dimming of lighting is likely to impact on investigations, crime prevention and detection.

3.8. Re-deployable CCTV

Re-deployable CCTV is used extensively in Cambridge to help address ASB and crime and disorder. In 2014/15 there were 42 deployments in various locations across the city for periods of from 2 to 12 weeks. Generally the evidence from the CCTV Operations suggests that when cameras are erected incident numbers drop and arrest figures decline, suggesting they are an effective deterrent. However, we do need to have adequate lighting in place where the cameras are deployed, which is usually in residential areas where there is no centrally controlled CCTV. The Safer Communities Section of the City Council and the police sometimes rely on evidence from re-deployable cameras in hotspot areas where residents are not inclined to come forward due to fear of recriminations.

Recent locations for these cameras as an example are:

- I. Sidney Sussex St (ASB, fighting etc. after clubs close)
Requested by Police
- II. Scotland Rd/ Green End Rd (ASB, drug and alcohol abuse and boy racers) Requested by ASB Team
- III. Minerva Way (Fly Tipping) Requested by Street Scene Team
- IV. Cherry Hinton Recreation Ground (Reports of increase in knife crime, muggings) Police Request.

3.9. Response from local police

The local police response to the proposal states that;

Any dimming / removal of lights which has an adverse effect on the capabilities of the CCTV will have an adverse effect on crime prevention and detection. Whilst the key locations for CCTV are in the city centre (particularly those areas that cover night time economy hotspots in Market Square, Rose Crescent, Sidney

Street, St Andrews Street and Regent Street), CCTV is often an essential tool in tracking and identifying people as they leave the city having been involved in crime, whether offender or victim. We have good operational support and coverage from our existing CCTV and a reduction of capability is likely to have an impact with regard to subsequent investigations.

3.11 The Executive Councillor is recommended to work with the County Council in line with the recommendations

1. Implications

1.1. Financial Implications

We have not had an indication from the County on the saving relating to their proposals in the City. It is suggested that the figures quoted at 3.3 be used as a benchmark to ensure the City does not take a disproportionate share of the savings.

1.2. Staffing Implications (if not covered in Consultations Section)

Any staffing issues for the city council are likely be covered by current resource.

1.3. Equality and Poverty Implications

We will need to carry out an equality impact assessment when we have more detail of current proposals and potential alternatives being agreed with the County.

1.4. Environmental Implications

As part of this section, assign a climate change rating to your recommendation(s) or proposals. You should rate the impact as either:

The impact will be assessed when the detailed proposals have been agreed.

1.5. Procurement

None

1.6. Consultation and communication

It is being suggested that a public consultation is necessary before the proposals come into effect at 2.1.

1.7. Community Safety

As stated in the report

2. Background Papers

These background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

An equality impact assessment will be carried out when we have established the detail of the lighting proposal

3. Appendices

None

4. Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

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