My ref: MK/SK
Your ref:

Date: 9th May 2011

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Cambridgeshire County Council

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CUSTOMER & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES
12 MAY 2011
RECEIVED

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Dear Antoinette

Cambridge City Council Resolution – Revised Street Light Policy

Thank you for your letter of 13 April 2011 addressed to Mark Lloyd giving details of the City Council resolution regarding street lighting in the City Centre. As I mentioned in my e-mail to you on the 19th April I would respond on my return from leave, which is as follows.

I set out below the reasons for the change in the Council's street lighting policy, its impact on the City centre and how the consultation will work.

The County Council like all local authorities has a reduced budget for 2011/12 onwards as a result of the Comprehensive Spending Review in 2010. All areas of budget have been under scrutiny and street lighting has not been excluded from this.

Fortunately back in 2007, the Council submitted an Expression of Interest for PFI credits for its street lighting. The reason that these were available was because Government was aware that in most Councils there had been an under investment in its street lighting stock and as a result there was a national backlog. For Cambridgeshire it has about 80% of its 52,000 street lights beyond their design life with a number which are over 40 years old.

Evidence of this backlog is that there have been a number of high profile street lighting columns falling in different parts of the country, and while structural testing is part of our routine maintenance, we also have found columns in need of emergency removal.

Following our Expression of Interest, we were invited to move to submitting an Outline Business Case in 2008, which was successful and we were invited to move into procurement, which has resulted in the award of the street lighting PFI contract with Government funding the capital cost for the replacement of the out of date street lights. It does not fund additional street lighting in areas where there is no existing system.

The PFI contract works on an output specification whereby the Council specifies the light level on the road for each of its lighting classes and the service provider designs its lighting installation to deliver the output specification.

As part of the 2011/12 budget round, and despite the PFI contract, it was agreed that the existing street lighting budget needed to be reduced by 10% as it could not be immune from the financial pressures, nor could other services take a greater reduction to protect street lighting.

The street lighting PFI contract, at the end of the 5 year replacement programme, will deliver energy savings of at lest 50% from the present and as a consequence similar savings in carbon emissions.

This will be achieved by modern and efficient street lighting switch gear, dimming of street lighting by a maximum of 40% in the early hours (outside town centres) and the provision of a central management system which would allow for greater control over light levels. For residential roads only, because the quality of the street lighting is improved, moving from orange light to white light, the numbers of street lighting columns will be reduced a little so as not to over light the residential streets.

For Cambridge, there will be no reductions in street lights in the City Centre, this will be upgraded. For all the traffic routes, again these will be upgraded and a double dimming regime used i.e. reduced by 20% at 10pm, once the traffic flows have diminished, and a further 20% at midnight, the light level being restored back to 100% light levels at 6am. The residential streets will have its lighting quality improved and column numbers reduced as mentioned above.

It is also important that there are choices for all our communities, therefore on the residential roads where it is proposed to reduce the numbers of columns, the local council can elect to take over their ownership and be responsible for their ongoing energy and maintenance. Additionally if in any particular area there is the need for a different type of street lighting column, then as long as any additional installation costs and any additional energy costs are funded outside of the County Council, then these can be installed.

It does have to be noted that most ornate street lights, which look good during the day, are not very effective at night in illuminating the road and have a high level of light spill. With pressure to reduce carbon emissions, the use of ornate street light should be the exception.

Cambridge City Council should be reassured that the light levels in the City won't be reduced as a result of the need to make savings in the street lighting service and that once the refurbishment of the City is completed as part of the PFI project an enhanced quality of light will be experienced.

I hope the above is of some use in updating you regarding this project. I would be grateful if you could identify a contact for us, within the City Council, who we can discuss the next phases of the project with.

Yours sincerely



Mark Kemp
Service Director : Highways and Access

Copy to: Mark Lloyd
John Onslow