



Report to Cabinet Member for Transportation

Decision to be taken on or after 21 December 2007

Decision can normally be implemented at least 3 working days after decision has
been signed.

Cabinet Member Report No. T06.07

Title: Switching Off Street Lights to Save Energy Trial – Phase 2

Date: 12 November 2007

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Electoral Divisions Affected: All

Relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Community and
Environmental Services

Summary

This project has been developed to reduce energy consumption and costs and it is intended that the trial will be implemented in two phases.

Phase 1 of the trial was successfully implemented in August 2007. Additional sites across the county where further lights may be switched off have now been identified and have been subject to detailed inspection and consultation.

This report highlights some feedback received following Phase 1, summarises the comments received from the Phase 2 consultation and seeks approval to implement Phase 2 of the trial.

Recommendation

The Cabinet Member for Transportation is invited to:

1. **NOTE** the comments received in relation to Phase 1 of the trial;
2. **NOTE** the comments received as a result of the Phase 2 consultation;
3. **APPROVE** that the sites proposed for Phase 2 be taken forward so that the enhancement measures required can be completed and that the lights are able to be switched off from April 2008.

A. Background & Scheme Design Process

1. The County Council has agreed that one of the ways to achieve a reduction its energy consumption and costs, is to trial to switching off up to 2000 street lights. This policy was agreed as part of the County Council's Medium Term Planning process in 2006. Phase 1 of the trial commenced in August 2007 when 287 street lights were switched off at seven locations across the County.
2. Since then, work has been ongoing to identify those further sites that could be considered as Phase 2 of the trial. Originally about 65 potential sites were considered including specific sites (e.g. roundabouts) and lengths of road up to several kilometres long. Following informal internal discussions it was agreed that roundabout sites would be excluded from Phase 2. This left 39 potential sites spread across the county as set out below:

District	Number of sites	Number of lights
Aylesbury Vale	12	307
Chiltern	8	326
South Bucks	13	610
Wycombe	6	125
Totals	39	1,368

3. All potential sites have been examined in detail and this has included consideration of the collision record, any community safety issues, any accessibility issues and any other relevant details or issues that may be affected by switching off street lights. All sites now being progressed for Phase 2 have been assessed as being suitable for further consideration after this initial process.
4. All sites have now been visited and existing traffic management conditions have been recorded. This has included existing signing, road markings, road studs, foliage problems, visibility etc. In each case, enhancement measures have been proposed to mitigate against any potential problems that may arise if it is agreed that the street lights can be switched off. In every case, these will be implemented before any lights are switched off.
5. At all sites, it is proposed that only the street lights and some lighting units will be switched off. All internally lit bollards will be replaced by new highly reflective 'rebound' bollards and lit signs on traffic islands will remain illuminated after the street lights have been switched off.
6. As with Phase 1, an independent safety audit has been undertaken for all Phase 2 sites. This does not raise any significant policy or principle issues that were not raised for Phase 1. It does though suggest or recommend additional enhancement works at some of the sites and these are now being considered as part of the enhancement measures proposed.
7. Throughout the design process, the County Council has taken into account any other proposed works or development at any of the potential sites. Additionally, the County Council has discussed the proposed approach with Thames Valley Police who are supportive of the trial and who recognise that many of the enhancement measures are likely to have road safety benefits at the potential sites throughout the day as well as when the lights are switched off.

B. Other options considered

8. A number of other options to reduce energy consumption and costs have been considered. These have included switching off lights between set times and replacing existing serviceable lights with new modern technology that may have lower running costs. These have both been ruled out as the capital cost of upgrading or replacing equipment to enable this to happen is not considered to be cost effective. Where future routine maintenance is required, the opportunity will be taken to upgrade to the most cost effective equipment.
9. Another alternative suggested has been to turn off alternate lights but this cannot be recommended as this would lead to dark and lit areas at the same site leading to confusion for all road users. Where it is proposed that all lights are switched off, alternative enhancement measures being provided will provide clarity for all road users.

C. Resource implications

10. Ultimately it is estimated that Phase 1 and 2 together will save approximately £85,000 a year in County Council energy costs and will represent a saving in total carbon emissions of around 500 tonnes of CO².
11. The estimated cost of undertaking the enhancement measures prior to switch off and completing Phase 2 is in the region of £600,000. This cost, which was approved by the Business Improvement Board in June 2007, is being funded from commuted sums.
12. In addition to saving energy costs, it is expected that if the trial is a success and columns are removed, further savings will accrue due to reduced structural and electrical testing costs. This will though need to be offset by any increase in maintenance of signing, lining and road studs costs.

D. Value For Money (VFM) Self Assessment

13. *Effectiveness:* This activity is essential to the delivery of an outcome from the Council's Medium Term Plan. Level A.
Efficiency: This approach will ensure that the Council will be nationally recognised as a national leader in this field of work in terms of the way the activity is carried out. Level A.
Economy: This approach will ensure that the Council reduces its energy costs between 8 – 10%. Level B.

E. Legal implications

14. The County Council, as highway authority, does not have a duty to provide street lights. It does though have the power to provide street lights where they are considered necessary for highway reasons.
15. Prior to the commencement of Phase 1 of this trial, the County Council did seek Counsel's opinion on this trial. This concluded that there were no legal reasons why this trial could not be pursued, subject to individual consideration of the conditions at each site prior to making the decision to switch off the street lights. As a result of this opinion, the robust assessment process, mentioned earlier has been undertaken at all potential sites proposed.

F. Property implications

16. There are no property implications arising from this trial.

G. Other implications/issues

17. An equalities impact assessment has been carried out on the core function of the trial and is included as Annex C. {The trial is subject to rigorous monitoring and the outcomes will be closely monitored (see Section J).}

Value for money assessment has been conducted (please see Section D). {The trial is subject to rigorous monitoring and the outcomes will be closely monitored (see Section J).}

Crime & Disorder: Through the consultation process TVP have been consulted along with Local Community Safety (See Section A7). {The trial is subject to rigorous monitoring and the outcomes will be closely monitored (see Section J).}

All responses received have been collated and are summarised in Annex A. {The trial is subject to rigorous monitoring and the outcomes will be closely monitored (see Section J).}

H. Feedback from consultation and Local Member views

18. All the Phase 2 sites have now been subjected to a consultation exercise. The consultation which ran from 14 September to 31 October included:
- A dedicated web page on the BCC website which included all relevant site and other information;
 - Individual letters to all Parish and Town Councils;
 - Individual letter to all County Councillors;
 - Individual letter to all organisations on the BCC consultee list, including District Councils, emergency services etc;
 - Individual letter to all neighbouring highway authorities where our proposals adjoined or are close to the county boundary;
 - An article in the Autumn Buckinghamshire Times edition;
 - A report for information at all four October Local Committees.
19. All responses were encouraged through the website although a number of letters and e-mails have also been received. All responses received have been collated and are summarised on the attached Annex A.
20. 89 respondents responded online and of them 56 (62.92%) agreed with the principle of switching off street lights to save energy and carbon emissions. 25 (28.09%) disagreed and 8 (8.99%) didn't know or were unsure.
21. Of the 89 respondents, 36 made detailed comments and a number also made suggestions for other sites where street lights may be able to be turned off. These are all summarised in Annex A.
22. Although comments on Phase 1 were not specifically invited at this time, a number of comments were made and these have been noted and summarised in Annex B.
23. Whilst the comments are wide ranging as might be expected, the majority do seem to support the proposals but are naturally concerned at what they consider may be possible

consequences. It will be important to address and clarify as many of these concerns as possible but it is recommended that all sites can proceed and that street lights are switched off as proposed.

I. Communication issues

24. There is a commitment to respond to this consultation by providing a summary of the comments, with a response if needed, on the saving energy web page. This web page - www.buckscc.gov.uk/streetlightingenergy - includes details about this initiative and includes Frequently Asked Questions and other useful information about this trial.
25. Additionally, all known consultees who responded to this consultation have received a letter acknowledging their comments with an individual response where appropriate.
26. As the scheme progresses, further press releases, Local Committee reports and articles in the Buckinghamshire Times will be provided at the relevant times.

J. Progress Monitoring

27. This trial is expected to last for three years and during this time, the outcomes are being closely monitored. Each site where street lights are switched off will be regularly inspected, monitored and subjected to an ongoing safety audit process. The monitoring will last for three years and will include:
 - Collision records – for injury collisions (& damage only where records exist);
 - Other police records – e.g. any Crime & Disorder issues;
 - BCC records – e.g. vehicle damage to street furniture, speed / traffic flow data;
 - Inspections of signing, lining, road studs and foliage by Local Area Technicians;
 - Stage 3 (completion of scheme) safety audit;
 - Community, equality and other feedback – positive and negative.
 - Change in people's perception in the dark / night at each site.
28. If as a result of this monitoring it is identified that action is needed prior to the end of the three year trial period, this will be carefully considered in conjunction with the Cabinet Member at the earliest opportunity.

K. Review

29. A full review of the effectiveness of this project will be completed at the end of this trial.

Background Papers

Comments from Consultation
Stage 2 Safety Audit

Your questions and views

If you have any questions about the matters contained in this paper please get in touch with the Contact Officer whose telephone number is given at the head of the paper.

If you have any views on this paper that you would like the Cabinet Member to consider, or if you wish to object to the proposed decision, please inform the Democratic Services Team by 5.00pm on 20 December 2007. This can be done by telephone (to 01296 383610), Fax (to 01296 382538), or e-mail to cabinet@buckscc.gov.uk