

Maidstone Borough Council

Communities, Leisure Services and Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 13 August 2013

Urgent Item: Part-night Streetlights Consultation

Report of: Orla Sweeney, Overview & Scrutiny Officer

1. Introduction

1.1 Urgent Item – In accordance with Access to Information Procedure Rule 16 it has been agreed with the Chairman to take this item as an urgent item as the call for evidence has to be responded to by the 23 August 2013.

1.2 Kent Highways (Kent County Council) are seeking feedback on proposals to turn off some street lights for a number of hours over night, possibly between midnight and 5:30am. The consultation has county-wide relevance. The deadline for responses is Friday 23 August 2013. Full details of the consultation proposals are attached. Members are asked to consider forming a task and finish panel to meet week commencing 19th August to evaluate the ramifications of the proposals on Maidstone borough and formulate a response on behalf of the Committee.

2. Recommendation

2.1 The Committee should consider appointing a task and finish panel to respond to the consultation.

2.2. The Committee should also consider which relevant officers it should consult with in formulating its response.

3. Kent Highways – Part-night Streetlights consultation

3.1 Full details of the consultation are available on the Kent County Council Website:
http://www.kent.gov.uk/roads_and_transport/highway_maintenance/street_lights/sensible_street_lighting.aspx including the report 'A Common Sense Plan for Safe and Sensible Street Lighting.'

3.2 The following information which outlines, in brief, the consultation proposals has been taken from the website.

3.3 "The energy used to light Kent's streets next year will cost £6.4 million and will produce 29,000 tonnes of carbon emissions.

Over the past 2 years we have implemented a number of initiatives to reduce energy consumption, we have:

- replaced 3,441 failing lamps with energy efficient ones
- set lights to come on later and go off earlier
- dimmed lights at predetermined times

3.4 These initiatives have reduced energy charges by £130,000 annually but we need to do a lot more to combat the rising cost of energy and reduce pollution.

3.5 We are taking further action in two phases:

- **Phase 1 - trial the switch off of unnecessary lights**

3.6 Where current design standards would not recommend street lighting and there would be no adverse effect on the local area, we are switching off selected lights on a trial basis for a year. Find out which lights are affected by viewing our [interactive map](#) or [PDF plans of each district](#). This phase is currently underway.

- **Phase 2 - part-night lighting**

3.7 On selected roads, we propose that some lights would be turned off for a number of hours over night, possibly between midnight and 5:30am.

3.8 Our approach is similar to other local authorities. Lights will be considered suitable for part-night lighting unless they meet one or more of the exclusion criteria listed below:

- Main routes and locations with a significant night-time traffic record between 12 midnight and 5:30am (1am and 6:30am during British Summer Time).
- Town centres.
- Areas identified by the Police as having an existing record of crime or having the potential for increased crime levels if the street lighting is changed.
- Areas with sheltered housing and other residences accommodating vulnerable people.
- Areas with operational emergency services site including hospitals and nursing homes.
- Formal pedestrian crossings, subways and enclosed footpaths and alleyways where one end links to a road that is lit all night.
- Where road safety measures are in place on the highway, such as roundabouts, central carriageways islands, chicanes, speed humps, etc.
- Roads that have local authority CCTV or Police surveillance equipment.
- Sites with existing or with potential road safety concerns.

3.9 We're keen to hear your views about the hours of switch off and our exclusion criteria. To give your feedback please complete our [online form](#) before **23 August**. For alternative formats, please call 0300 3335539. Further engagement will take place with targeted areas as they are identified.

3.10 These proposals will:

- significantly reduce street lighting carbon emissions by around 5,000 tonnes
- save Kent taxpayers around £1 million a year in electricity costs.”

3.11 The information available on the Kent County Council website also includes Frequently Asked Questions, attached at **Appendix A**.

4. Impact on Corporate Objectives

4.1 The Committee will consider reports that deliver against the following Council priorities:

- ‘For Maidstone to be a decent place to live.’

4.2 The Strategic Plan sets the Council’s key objectives for the medium term and has a range of objectives which support the delivery of the Council’s priorities.