

**SCRUTINY REVIEW: IMPACT OF THE
PART NIGHT STREET LIGHTING
POLICY
24 JANUARY 2018**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR MRS A M NEWTON (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors S R Kirk (Vice-Chairman), A N Stokes and R H Trollope-Bellew

Councillors: attended the meeting as observers

Officers in attendance:-

Sara Barry (Safer Communities Manager), John Cook (Acting Assistant Chief Fire Officer), John Monk (Group Manager (Design Services)), Daniel Steel (Scrutiny Officer), Ethan Thorpe (Communications) (Strategic Communications Lead) and Rachel Wilson (Democratic Services Officer)

24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors G E Cullen, D McNally, P A Skinner and M J Storer.

25 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest at this point in the meeting.

26 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 6 DECEMBER 2017

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2017 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

27 ANALYSIS: OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITIES PART NIGHT LIGHTING
ARRANGEMENTS

Consideration was given to a report which set out the part night light arrangements of other authorities. It was reported that a national research project in October 2014 identified that 48% of lighting authorities that responded had instigated some part night lighting. It was suggested that this would be a fair assumption that this figure would have risen as revenue pressures have increased and the energy usage of street lighting came under greater focus.

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Members were informed that the experience of other authorities had been canvassed through established contacts and professional technical groups. Information was received from the following authorities:

- Cambridgeshire
- Nottinghamshire
- Derbyshire
- Leicestershire
- Warwickshire
- North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire
- Norfolk County Council
- Kent County Council
- Suffolk County Council

Members were provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information contained within the report and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- From what other authorities had done, it did not seem that there was a 'one size fits all' approach as they were all trying something slightly different.
- It was noted that a Central Management System did seem to be a good option in terms of exercising control of lights, but it would never be an invest to save option. It was also noted that as well as the initial installation cost, there was also an annual running cost each year.
- Any changes to part-night lighting had tended to be either in response to a spate of crime in a particular area or due to political will.
- The Panel had received police figures and they had shown there was no increase in crime which could be attributed to the part night lighting. The main issue to be tackled was fear of crime.
- The Council did have a responsibility for health and wellbeing which included addressing the issue of fear of crime.
- It was noted that reference was made in the street lighting policy to new lighting not being provided to address the fear of crime. There were options to introduce new streetlights in areas where there had been actual increases in crime or road safety incidents. However, additional lighting would not be introduced to address a fear of crime issue. It was noted that this section had been added in 10 years ago.
- It was noted that in Cambridgeshire, the city council had paid to keep the lights on and it was queried whether this was something to be explored. There were some substantial housing associations and they may like the option to pay for their own lights if they wish. However, it was thought this could be come complicated.
- It was suggested that a 'cleaner' option would be that if there were groups who wished for their lights to be on all night, they could pay for them to be converted to LED as a one off payment, and then the authority would cover the energy costs.
- The cost of conversion to an LED lamp was approximately £120 per unit, if carried out as part of the routine maintenance visit. The payback period was approximately 10 years.

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- It was confirmed that a risk assessment was carried out before the part night street lighting was implemented, and it was attached to the decision papers.
- It was queried whether, where streetlights had been turned back on due to a fear of crime in other authorities, was there any information on whether the fear of crime actually reduced as a result. It was noted that no information had been found in relation to this.
- It was noted that in the Almhouses in Spalding, some of the residents did feel better now the streetlights were back on, but this was not felt in a strong enough way for residents to contact the authority to express this. There was a feeling in the locality that it was better with the lights back on.
- If a scheme was developed for others to pay to convert lamps to LED to have the lights back on, it would be expected that the requests came formally through the town or parish council. It was thought that a scheme such as this could be doable, but consideration would need to be given to the programming of these conversions into the maintenance contract.

RESOLVED

That the Scrutiny Panel note the information provided.

28 BACKGROUND INFORMATION: A REVIEW OF OPEN SOURCE MATERIAL ABOUT THE FEAR OF CRIME AND STREET LIGHTING

Consideration was given to a report which provided the Panel members with an overview of the key findings from openly available studies about the fear of crime generally and specifically in relation to the issue of street lighting.

Members were advised that there was no evidence to link part night lighting to an increase in crime and it was people's fear of crime that needed to be addressed. It was highlighted that the report presented had been compiled by the Community Safety Unit. There was a need to plan out the drivers for people's fear of crime.

It was highlighted that research that research had shown that there were demographic factors which could influence an individual's fear of crime as in those aged 35 and over fear of becoming a victim was higher than the risk of what could actually happen to them, whilst those aged 16-24 were slightly less scared of crime, but had a higher actual risk of becoming a victim.

Members were provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information contained within the report and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- The full analysis of the survey results would be brought back to a future meeting.
- It would be interesting to see whether there was a difference between the view of urban and rural locations.
- Some initial information from survey responses was available.

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- Of the 5,300 survey responses, it was expected that at least 80% of them would be able to be mapped to at least district level. Only around 40% would give a very detailed location.
- The highest response rates were from Lincoln and West Lindsey. The lowest response rates were in Boston and South Holland. It was noted that although Boston had the lowest response rate, it had the highest negative response rate at 80%.
- It was commented that it was clear from the report that the notion of a link between part night lighting and crime could be discounted, but there was a real issue with fear of crime that could not be escaped, although there appeared to be no reason for it. There was a need for rational answers to people's irrational fears.
- There was a need to accept that there was a fear of crime and find a way to address it.
- It was commented that not everyone might have noticed the changes, as not everyone is out between the hours of midnight and 6am. Then when this is drawn to their attention, it maybe creating a fear of crime.
- It was commented that the part of the report which referred to people feeling as though there had been a de-investment in their area due to part night lighting was very interesting, and could be similar feelings in relation to reductions to grass cutting and weed spraying programmes.
- It was noted that if there was a power cut, it could take a few days for lights to re-establish their routine. It was commented that there had been a lot of individual responses regarding lights not going off at consistent times.

RESOLVED

That the information presented be noted.

29 ENGAGEMENT WITH LINCOLNSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer was in attendance to discuss with the Panel any perceived impacts on Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue of the Part Night Street Lighting policy.

When first asked to respond to the survey, there had been no negative impact on the service, as all fire engines were fitted with mast lights, torches and all firefighters helmets had LED lights installed. It was still believed that this was the case in relation to Service activities.

There had been a couple of cases where issues had been raised by fire fighters who felt that no street lighting had made it more hazardous responding to calls and travelling from home. Some of the issues included dark streets and not being able to see parked cars or other obstacles.

Members were provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- Retained fire fighters usually lived within a five minute radius of the fire station, that could be by foot, car or cycle.

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- It was noted that similar comments had been made by shift workers, that they found it more difficult to travel to work.
- From a Fire Service perspective, it was noted that staff were well supported to deal with incidents.
- It was queried whether there was any data about whether retained fire fighters were taking longer to respond and arrive at the fire station. Members were advised that data was collected in terms of how long it took a fire engine to turn out. Whether there was any correlation between part night lighting being introduced and extended turnout times could be considered.
- One member commented that it would be interesting to know the reasons why people were finding it more difficult to get from home to the fire station.
- It was thought that the analysis of the survey and free text should bring out some of these issues.
- Members were advised that fire engines were fitted with mobile data terminals, with mapping capabilities so they could see where they were on a map. However, it was noted that this did not give directions as would be the case with Satellite Navigation Systems.
- It was commented that it had been raised through the survey that one of issues could be that the emergency services would not be able to identify houses. However, it was reported that the Police had undertaken a campaign to encourage people to make sure that their houses were visible to the emergency services, and that the public had to take some personal responsibility for making their properties easily identifiable.
- It was noted that fire stations and the area immediately around a fire station were included within the exemption for part night lighting. It was requested that if any of the smaller fire stations had been missed, that the street lighting team was contacted.
- It was thought the issues were more about the journey to the fire station rather than finding the fire station itself.

RESOLVED

That the comments made be noted.

It was agreed that the meeting scheduled to be held on 8th February 2017 should be cancelled as the analysis of the survey results would not be complete by this time. The Panel would meet again on 22 February 2018.

The meeting closed at 10.50 am