

Meeting date: Monday 24th April 2023

Report to: Cabinet Member for Environment and Infrastructure

Report title: Street Lighting – Service Update and Strategy Launch

Report from: Mark O’Connell – Head of Highway Infrastructure

Report author/lead contact officer: Dean Ward – Principal Engineer

Wards affected:

- All Wards | Bickenhill | Blythe | Castle Bromwich | Chelmsley Wood |
 Dorridge/Hockley Heath | Elmdon | Kingshurst/Fordbridge | Knowle |
 Lyndon | Meriden | Olton | Shirley East | Shirley South |
 Shirley West | Silhill | Smith’s Wood | St Alphege
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Public/private report: Public

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the annual work of the street lighting service, along with details on the emerging street lighting strategy document which will guide the key policies for the provision of street lighting across Solihull to 2032.

2. Decision(s) Recommended

2.1 The Cabinet Member is asked:

- a) To note the street lighting work carried out during 2022/23.
- b) To approve the street lighting strategy document and the policies therein, including the continued standardisation of Solihull Council assets across the Borough.

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3. Matters for Consideration

3.1 In the last 12 months the Street Lighting team has completed several key projects as follows:

Streetscapes

3.2 Working with internal partners, third parties and residents, the team has transformed local centres, parks and the public realm through lighting schemes and decorations, including the Christmas lighting programme, bunting and banners for events such as the Commonwealth Games, as well as upgrading seating and planters.

Maintenance

3.3 The team has maintained a high standard of responsiveness to reports of damaged columns and other incidents throughout the year. In total the team responded to over 1,200 incidents, working closely with the emergency services where necessary, to make safe initially and then complete remedial works.

3.4 Overall, the maintenance team has ensured our assets are working, with faults on less than 0.05% at any one time.

Street Lighting Strategy Report

3.5 As a Lighting Authority, SMBC is charged with the management and provision of street lighting and other illuminated street furniture within the Borough. This involves fulfilling statutory obligations and making decisions about how to maintain existing lighting as well as providing new lighting.

3.6 The last strategy for Street Lighting was published in 2012 to cover the period to the end of 2022. Since 2012, there has been significant change and investment in the street lighting asset base, most notably around the use of LED technology.

3.7 The investment in the lantern replacement programme has delivered large reductions in energy usage and carbon emissions, whilst delivering an improved offer to those who use the road network. Energy usage has fallen from 11,583,752 kWh in 2015/16 to just over 5,555,889 kWh at the end of 2020/21. When combined with a wider de-carbonisation of the National Grid, associated carbon emissions have fallen from 5,750 tonnes to 1,394 tonnes over the same time period - a 75% decrease, which has helped the Council with its climate change objectives.

3.8 In addition to the above, the Council is signed up to a green energy tariff which offsets emissions and results in an overall zero carbon service.

3.9 The step change in our assets has been matched by changes to working practices. LEAN tools and techniques have been employed throughout the service and robust procurement and contract monitoring processes help to ensure the in-house service continues to offer value for money. The service has continued its tradition of investing in the next generation, creating apprenticeships for both electrical and business

administration functions.

- 3.10 Further opportunities lie ahead over the lifetime of the new strategy. Whilst there does not appear to have been much change to date in terms of the remote control and monitoring and collection of wider environmental data through the street lighting network, the Smart Cities movement is gathering momentum and will need to be considered and evaluated carefully. Changes in how and why we use electricity, particularly for electric vehicles, will undoubtedly shape other opportunities that may also have a result on this service area.
- 3.11 There will also be challenges ahead. Although we have seen investment in our lantern stock and a resultant fall in energy usage and carbon emissions, future development growth associated with the Local Plan will mean a pressure to add more assets to our inventory. Maximising the life of our existing assets, particularly columns, and investing in their replacement in a financially sustainable way will also continue.
- 3.12 This new Street Lighting Strategy sets out the vision for the service for the next ten years and the Council's strategic aims and key policies in delivering that vision. Accompanying the Strategy is a comprehensive Action Plan.
- 3.13 The Action Plan and Strategic Vision outline the following objectives as set out in Appendix A:
- To minimise future energy usage and carbon emissions by using appropriate lighting standards and ensuring that new street lighting is provided only where necessary
 - To ensure that illuminated signs and bollards are used only where essential for the purposes of road safety and minimising congestion
 - Promote and maintain the safety for all highway users, particularly the more vulnerable modes of walking and cycling
 - Deliver well-designed street lighting in keeping with the environment which helps to provide good quality of place and encourages walking and cycling
 - Maintain the street lighting network to a good standard
 - Develop and implement a cost-effective street lighting solution, deploying the latest technological innovations that provide benefits to public, the environment and service efficiencies
 - Look for opportunities to undertake dimming and switching off street lighting assets where appropriate.

4. What options have been considered and what is the evidence telling us about them?

- 4.1 The alternative to the current strategy would be to continue with our existing mode of operation for the street lighting service.
- 4.2 With continual improvements being made to technology across the street lighting industry it is possible that by not looking to opportunities for standardisation and upgrading, the Borough could find itself with an outdated and inefficient stock that

would be difficult and costly to maintain.

5. Reasons for recommending preferred option

- 5.1 By continuing to invest in new technology and assets, the street lighting service will be able to continue to provide safe and efficient street lighting, whilst also being at the forefront of the energy and carbon reduction agenda.

6. Implications and Considerations

- 6.1 State how the proposals in this report contribute to the priorities in the [Council Plan](#):

Priority:	Contribution:
<p>People and Communities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improving outcomes for children and young people in Solihull. 2. Good quality, responsive, and dignified care and support for Adults in Solihull when they need it. 3. Take action to improve life chances and health outcomes in our most disadvantaged communities. 4. Enable communities to thrive. 	<p>By working collaboratively and flexibly with third parties, parish councils and businesses it will allow us to provide competitive pricing for street lighting and other such work within public realm areas and local centres.</p>
<p>Economy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Develop and promote the borough's economy, with a focus on revitalising our town and local centres. 6. Maximising the opportunities of UK Central and HS2. 7. Increase the supply of affordable and social housing that is environmentally sustainable. 	<p>The street lighting strategy seeks to be forward looking and works with master planners to develop revitalised town centre areas along with ensuring developments, such as HS2, meet a high standard of design and implementation</p>
<p>Environment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Enhance our natural environment, improve air quality and reduce net carbon emissions. 	<p>Review opportunities for reduced energy usage through dimming and more efficient lighting and maintenance operations.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Promote employee wellbeing 	<p>None</p>

- 6.2 Consultation and Scrutiny:

- 6.2.1 None

- 6.3 Financial implications:

- 6.3.1 The day to day running of the Street Lighting Team and the undertaking of its statutory

duties as set out in this report are primarily funded through Council core revenue funding. The 2023/24 approved revenue budget for the service is £2.959million with £1.951million budgeted for energy costs. The approved Highways Services 2023/24 capital programme budgeted allocation for Street Lighting is £504,000.

6.4 Legal implications:

6.4.1 None

6.5 Risk implications, including Risk Appetite:

6.5.1 None

6.6 Equality implications:

6.6.1 None

6.7 Linkages to our work with the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), Local Enterprise Partnership or the Birmingham & Solihull Integrated Care System (ICS):

6.7.1 None

7. List of appendices referred to

7.1 Appendix A – Street Lighting Strategy 2023 - 2033

8. Background papers used to compile this report

8.1 None

9. List of Other Relevant Documents

9.1 None