



ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 20 October 2021

REPORT TITLE:	STREET LIGHTING IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME, PROGRESS REPORT
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

REPORT SUMMARY

This report provides an update for Members on progress of the council's current programme to improve and upgrade its street lighting stock, as well as on potential future proposals for street lighting.

The improvement of Wirral's street lighting infrastructure contributes to the Wirral Plan 2021-26 themes of sustainable environment and safe and pleasant communities.

This matter affects all wards within the borough.

This is not a key decision.

RECOMMENDATION

The Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee is recommended to note the contents of this report.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 The condition and efficacy of the council's street lighting infrastructure is very important to residents and Members alike. A major contract supporting the improvement of the council's street lighting stock and providing significant financial and environmental benefits is nearing completion and accordingly it is appropriate to update Members at this time.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 This report provides an update on an improvement programme containing previously agreed and approved options. The report also contains potential proposals which will be brought to other future Committee meetings in due course with associated options. Thus, there are no relevant other options to the recommendation made at this point.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Wirral has 37,470 streetlights on its adopted highway network, as well as 4,860 illuminated traffic signs. Wirral's street lighting asset is managed in accordance with the Highway Infrastructure Asset Management (HIAM) Policy and Strategy, and Street Lighting Policy, which were approved by the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee on 3 December 2020.
- 3.2 As phase one of the council's LED replacement programme in 2016, 7,000 of the council's worst performing (in energy efficiency) street lighting lanterns on the council's main arterial roads were replaced with modern light-emitting diode (LED) powered lanterns. These LED lanterns are more reliable, provide improved lighting, and are more energy efficient, so result in revenue cost savings (both energy supply and ongoing maintenance). Between 2016 and 2019, as part of the council's ongoing reactive maintenance activities, any full lantern replacements required on other roads were also made using LED lanterns. Some old sodium lanterns were repaired during this period where it was more cost-effective to do so.
- 3.3 By 2019 approximately 28,000 old and inefficient sodium lanterns remained on the council's highway network, mainly on residential roads. In 2017 a full structural condition survey was conducted on all the council's lighting columns and up to 9,000 were found to be in need of replacement in the short-term.
- 3.4 Consequently an LED phase 2 project was initiated and a procurement exercise commenced to secure a contractor. Funding of £4.46m was secured for the lantern replacements from the Salix government promoted interest-free loan scheme on an invest-to save business case, with the loan having to be re-paid from council revenue budget savings accrued from energy savings. A further £6.85m was secured in council capital borrowing (approved December 2017) over three years. The council capital was required to finance column replacements that were of high priority for safety reasons. Between September 2017 and April 2018, several lighting columns and lanterns were identified at risk and required immediate replacement. This work was carried out by the council's direct service Highway Operational

Services (HOS) team, by discrete short-term contract procurements, or through other major scheme delivery, and charged to the capital budget allocated to the overall LED Phase 2 project. Additionally, the council procured through purchasing frameworks a significant number of LED lanterns at best-value rates which would be issued to the successful contractor so that an early commencement could be made on site in Autumn 2019. A further £1.5m council capital programme funding was approved in September 2021 to supplement this work retrospectively as well as the electric vehicle charging infrastructure trial and main contract variations. Additionally, £77,000 in grant funding was secured from the government's Office for Zero Emissions Vehicles (OZEV) for an on street electric vehicle charging trial.

3.5 A contract was awarded to SSE Contracting Ltd (SSE) in September 2019, to include 26,600 lantern replacements and 9,200 column replacements. The contract sum at award was £9,290,896.

3.6 A progress report, including: progress, performance and outcomes of the SSE contract; on street electric vehicle charging trial; heritage lighting and future structural maintenance requirements is included at Appendix 1 to this report.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no further financial implications at the present time. The budget exists to complete the SSE contract and programmed investment until the end of 2021/22, as summarised below. Further decisions will be required for funding of heritage lighting, further column replacements and electric vehicle charging provision as described in Appendix 1.

Street Lighting Infrastructure Improvements – Projected budget 2018-22

Council Capital Programme 2018/19	£2,000,000
Council Capital Programme 2019/20	£2,450,000
Council Capital Programme 2020/21	£2,400,000
Council Capital Programme 2021/22	£1,500,000
Salix Loan drawdown Nov 2019	£ 500,000
Salix Loan drawdown Mar 2020	£ 740,000
Salix Loan drawdown Mar 2020 (2 nd release)	£ 500,000
Salix Loan drawdown Jul 2020	£ 500,000
Salix Loan drawdown Nov 2020	£ 500,000
Salix Loan drawdown Jun 2021	£ 576,084
Salix Loan drawdown Oct 2021	£ 576,084
Salix Loan drawdown Mar 2022	£ 576,084
OZEV grant	£ 77,000
Total Budget	£12,895,252

Street Lighting Infrastructure Improvements – Projected spend 2018-22

SSE contract itemised measured works	£9,290,896
SSE contract variations	£ 731,849
Client costs and other direct works undertaken	£2,872,507
Total Spend	£12,895,252

- 4.2 Each instalment year of the Salix loan will be re-paid over 5 years using revenue savings resulting from reduced energy supply costs, reduced maintenance costs and carbon budget savings as a result of switching to LED lanterns, and this has been profiled in the council's budgets for 2019/20 until 2026/27. Beyond April 2027, applicable revenue savings may be made against the council's budget.
- 4.3 The estimated ongoing fixed costs of supplying free on street vehicle charging for the 12-month trial period between October 2021 and October 2022 is £5,200, which will be financed from the council's climate emergency budget. The estimated cost of energy supplied during the trial is not predictable until uptake data is available but will initially be financed from the service energy supply budget. Both fixed and variable costs for providing the on-street charging points will be recovered once tariffs are set after the trial period ends.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Whilst there is no statutory duty for local authorities in the United Kingdom to provide public street lighting, the Highways Act 1980 empowers a highway authority to provide lighting for any highway or proposed highway. Where street lighting is provided local authorities have a duty to ensure it is safe.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 On-going Digital staffing support is required to ensure the effective management of the systems used to ensure the street lighting service can function effectively. There are no additional specific ICT, staffing or assets implications relating to this report.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 All contracts for the supply of services relating to street lighting have contract-specific risk registers monitored by the appropriate contract management hierarchy. Service specific strategic and operational risks relating to the council's street lighting service and assets are contained in the Highways and Infrastructure service risk register which was reviewed in September 2021. There are no further specific risk implications relating to this report, which is a general position update.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Residents were consulted over the provision of the electric vehicle charging trial locations. A number of public communications have been issued throughout the implementation of this programme and dedicated web pages have been created, as indicated in Appendix 1.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity.

9.2 This report is a position update only and no assessment has been undertaken in relation to this report.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 By 2030 7,700 Tonnes of carbon emissions will have been avoided since 2019, as result of the LED installations, compared with the emissions that would have been produced by the previous lantern types. Increasing decarbonisation of the national grid through the greater use of renewable generation sources has led to greater availability of green tariffs and the energy the council is purchasing for its street lighting from 2021/22 is on such a tariff that is net carbon neutral. This is a significant contribution towards the council's commitment to be net carbon neutral from its own activities by 2030.

10.2 The provision of on street electric vehicle charging infrastructure allowing members of the public to charge electric vehicles direct from the council's street lighting columns on a free 12-month trial basis will contribute to the council's policy and strategy setting for borough-wide carbon reductions towards the council's 2040 net carbon neutral target.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The social value benefits delivered by the SSE contract include the direct employment of local Wirral residents on the contract works with an equivalent value delivered of £240,714.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Progress Report

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Exempt commercial contract information. Service asset information. Contract closure report, Amey Consulting Ltd.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee – Highway Infrastructure Asset management Policy, Strategy and Street Lighting Policy	3 December 2020