

# **STREET LIGHTING TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

## **REPORT TO PLACES SCRUTINY PANEL**

28 November 2013

STRATEGIC AIM:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Creating a Safer Community</li><li>• Creating a Sustainable Environment</li></ul>
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### **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To report to the Places Scrutiny Panel the work of Street Lighting Task and Finish Group, and to seek the Panels approval for the Group's recommendations.

### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 **That the Scrutiny Panel supports the outline principles set out in section 6 and that they should be the basis of any policy going forward.**
- 2.2 **That officers evaluate the feasibility, costs and legal implications of the three sets of proposals as set out in Appendixes 4, 5, 6 and from this produce a report to Cabinet with recommendations for a new Council policy.**
- 2.3 **That the Scrutiny Panel delegates to Cllr Lammie Chair of the Task and Finish as the contact for officers, if further information is required regarding the report.**
- 2.4 **That before the officer paper goes to Cabinet the Places Scrutiny Panel takes the paper first.**

### **3. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

So that a proper defined policy for the provision and payment of street lighting can be established by the Council.

### **4. BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 The provision of street lighting is not a statutory duty. RCC (as Highway Authority), Parish and Town Councils are defined as lighting authorities by the Highways Act 1980 and have the power to install and maintain street lighting.
- 4.2 On 7<sup>th</sup> February 2012 Cabinet considered a report on street lighting which contained a recommendation that "from April 2013 Parish and Town

Councils pay the actual cost of energy for their street lighting, subject to satisfactory consultation with Parish and Town Councils.”

- 4.3 Cabinet’s decision was “That a policy for the achievement of the Clear Transfer of responsibility between highways and town and Parish Councils be developed and brought back with the objective of achieving fairness be agreed.”
- 4.4 On 5<sup>th</sup> July 2012 the Places Scrutiny Panel agreed to form a Task and Finish Group to Consider Street Lighting. The Membership of the Group is Cllr's Oxley, Lammie and Cross.
- 4.5 On 20<sup>th</sup> September 2012 the Places Scrutiny Panel accepted the terms of reference for the Task and Finish Group (Appendix 1).
- 4.6 After initial meetings in the autumn of 2012 it became clear the Council did not have a full audit of the county’s lighting stock including breakdown of who owned which lights. The Group decided to halt its work until E-on had completed a survey of Rutland’s lights and could provide the Group with a full audit and map of the lights.
- 4.7 A full audit was completed and a map compiled of the street lighting in the county in the spring of 2013 and the Group restarted its work (Appendix 2 (Green stars= RCC owned lights, Red Starts= Parish owned lights)).
- 4.8 In the course of its work the Task and Finish group meet with E-on the Councils maintenance contractor for lights to discuss money saving options. A presentation was given to the Parish Council forum on the groups work.
- 4.9 The Group researched the lighting policies of Neighbouring County Council’s and other lighting authorities who have a policy in place for street lighting.
- 4.10 A verbal update was provided by the Chair of the Task and Finish Group to the August 2013 Places Scrutiny Panel meeting. From the discussion the Panel there was an agreement that the Group now put together a set of proposals in a report which outlines the current situation and from this officers will do a report to Cabinet with recommendations after evaluating the options put forward by the Group

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## **5. CURRENT ARRANGMENTS**

- 5.1 RCC does not have any policy for where street lights should be situated.
- 5.2 The total lighting stock in Rutland is 4648. The annual bill to RCC for energy is approximately £115k. Due to rising energy costs this is likely to increase by 20% next year.
- 5.3 There is no consistency between the Villages and Towns for who owns specific lights (in one village the lights on the Main Street may be owned by RCC and in the next village they could be owned by the Parish Council).

- 5.4 Approximately 30% of the street lights in the county are Town or Parish lights. This proportion varies significantly between Parishes due to historical factors.
- 5.5 Parish Councils pay on a formula of £1 per council tax payer towards the cost of energy for Parish lighting regardless of how many street lights they have, or the types of lights.
- 5.6 Parish's either pay their contribution to RCC for Parish lighting via a quarterly charge to the Council or they pay the supplier the total costs directly, submitting a return to the Council which then provides the Parish with a grant equivalent to the difference between formula of £1 per council tax payer and the monies they paid to the supplier.
- 5.7 There appears to be a number of Parishes who pay the whole of their Parish lighting costs to the Supplier directly and who don't then receive a grant.
- 5.8 The current arrangement and contribution figures were established in 1991 and no adjustments have been made since that time. This has resulted in an annual cost of £24k for RCC as the current annual cost of Parish energy is £37k and the total Parish contribution is £12,800. Appendix 3 outlines the Parish lighting gross expenditure and the Parish Contributions via the Formula.
- 5.9 RCC pays the energy and maintenance costs for its own lighting stock.
- 5.10 With the Parishes, Towns and RCC all being Lighting Authorities, with changes to the Local government structure in Rutland that have taken place over a number of years and because the last calculation for Parish Contributions was done in 1991 it means there is a great discrepancy in who provides lighting and how much if any a Parish or Town will pay.
- 5.11 Since Parish's and Towns are their own lighting authorities they have individual contract with the energy suppliers.

## **6. PRINCIPLES BEHIND ANY NEW POLICY**

The Task and Finish Group is split on the specifics of a detailed policy which could be introduced however there are some key principles which the group has agreed on from undertaking its work. These are-

- 6.1 The current arrangements for paying for street lighting are unfair and out of date.
- 6.2 That there should be a policy setting the Councils position in relation to where lighting should be provided and who should be responsible for paying for them.
- 6.3 That every Parish or Town Council which collects a precept should contribute towards the costs of street lighting.
- 6.4 Any change in policy should at least be cost neutral to RCC.

- 6.5 That the 1991 funding formula based on Parish contributions of £1 per elector be scrapped as part of any replacement scheme.
- 6.6 The County Council should fund essential highway lighting.

## 7. RISK MANAGEMENT

<b>RISK</b>	<b>IMPACT</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
<b>Time</b>	<b>Medium</b>	Sufficient time must be allowed for changes to be reflected in the setting of Parish precepts. This means a policy will not be implemented in time for the 2014-2015 budget.
<b>Viability</b>	<b>Medium</b>	Some Parish and Town Councils may not want to participate in any changes to the current arrangements, which could stall the development of a policy.
<b>Finance</b>	<b>Medium</b>	Any changes to the funding of lights would affect either the Councils or Parishes finances.
<b>Profile</b>	<b>Medium</b>	As street lighting plays an important role in the perception of personal safety, any operational changes are likely to generate significant interest.
<b>Equality and Diversity</b>	<b>Low</b>	No issues identified at this stage. Any proposed changes as a result of the review will require an equality impact assessment.

### Background Papers

Cabinet 7<sup>th</sup> February 2011 – Street Lighting -  
 Report No. 23/2012  
 Places Scrutiny 12<sup>th</sup> January 2011 – Street Lighting -  
 Report No. 11/2012  
 Places Scrutiny 5<sup>th</sup> July 2012 – Street Lighting –  
 Report No. 128/2012  
 Places Scrutiny 20<sup>th</sup> September –  
 Street Lighting Terms of Reference –  
 Report 191/2012

### Report Author

Cllr James Lammie  
 e-mail:jlammie@rutland.gov.uk