

## **Divisions Affected - ALL**

### **CABINET 18 October 2022**

## **Street Lighting and Illuminated Assets Policy update**

**Report by Corporate Director of Environment & Place**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

1. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to**
  - (a) Support the new direction and approach for managing Street Lighting and Illuminated Assets to better reflect local requirements and aspirations of the governing administration in relation to a more sustainable and carbon considered approach.
  - (b) Approve adoption of the update of the County Council's Street Lighting and Illuminated Assets Policy statement as attached at ANNEX A.

### **Executive Summary**

2. This paper requests Cabinet approval of an updated Street Lighting and Illuminated Assets policy. The existing policy is considered to be out of date and no longer reflects the aspirations of the administration in terms of carbon saving and a more sustainable approach to all we do. To accommodate a number of key changes there is a requirement for a revised Street Lighting and Illuminated Assets policy and there will be development of a new procedure to support its implementation.

### **Background**

3. Oxfordshire County Council, as the Highway Authority, is responsible for the provision and maintenance of electrical assets on the road network throughout Oxfordshire excluding motorways and trunk roads.
4. Under the Highway Act 1980, the Council has the power but not the duty to provide Street Lighting. However, where we do provide it, we have a duty to maintain.

## CA11

5. The term “Street Lighting and Illuminated Assets” encompasses all mains powered illuminated assets on the adopted highway including streetlights, illuminated signs, bollards, and other street furniture that requires an electrical supply.
6. The new policy contains statements within the document that aim to support an approach whereby Street Lighting and Illuminated Assets infrastructure is only provided when justified, and only switched on when needed in relation to personal safety considerations. In particular, the most appropriate type of lighting is provided at the right times and not simply adopt lighting to be provided at all locations during all hours of darkness. This will ensure carbon reductions are at the forefront of any decisions relating to the design/installation of new Street Lighting and Illuminated Assets infrastructure.
7. The new policy will reduce the council’s impact on climate change and the environment, in line with Oxfordshire’s Climate Action Framework. This will be achieved through the use of optimised lighting systems whilst retaining appropriate safe passage for all users of the public highway.
8. The new policy takes into account the negative impact of light pollution on nature and dark skies in assessing where lighting should be added across the transport network. When new lighting is deemed to be necessary on grounds of public safety, then dimming and reduction in operating hours should be used to preserve the night sky and environmental impacts on the wider natural population.

For ***new developments*** it is ONLY when a clear safety need has been identified that lighting will be a part of the mitigation measures. Any installations going in not meeting the expectations of the council will not be adopted for public maintenance.

### **Corporate Policies and Priorities**

9. The policy is also informed by the Local Transport Connectivity Plan, the Highway Asset Management Plan, the Energy Strategy, and the Carbon Management Plan and is aligned to the council’s priority of putting action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work.

### **Financial Implications**

10. By adopting this policy and proposed new approach for Street Lighting and Illuminated Assets there will be some financial implications as we adopt new assets linked to housing growth (and innovation), increased energy costs whilst we attain decreasing maintenance costs for the existing assets due to the LED replacement programme.
11. The revised policy will enable the team to effectively manage the new lighting assets being added to the network on a case-by-case basis to ensure that only the areas that require lighting for safety reasons are lit. this will help to minimise

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the financial implications of having multiple new assets to supply energy too. This will ensure as far as reasonably practicable that the number of new assets is kept to a minimum thus maintaining a constant number of assets within the county (as per the existing policy).

12. A revised street lighting requirement approach should not require a revision to the existing capital and revenue programme. If additional funding is required, it will be necessary to reprioritise the funding distribution across the various maintenance streams within Highways. Long term funding for energy costs will be raised, discussed, and agreed as part of the council's annual budget setting process.

Comments checked by:

Rob Finlayson, (Environmental) (Finance)

### **Legal Implications**

13. The legal risks arising from this report surround the reduction or dimming of streetlights and the broader safer streets movement. There may also be challenges from the public on new developments on their expectations.

Comments checked by:

Jennifer Crouch Principal Solicitor (Environmental) (Legal)

### **Staff Implications**

14. There are no staffing implications for this amended policy

### **Equality & Inclusion Implications**

15. The proposed policy and innovative approach have been assessed (**ANNEX 1**) (Section 3 of the Impact Assessment and are not considered to bias or discriminate individuals or groups. As specific schemes are progressed as part of the programme these will be assessed in detail as they are brought forward. The Street lighting and illuminated assets steering group considered (and were aided by) various groups within the community to understand the impact the proposals could have. The policy takes account of people with disabilities ranging from light sensitivity, visual impairments, mental health disorders or physical restrictions and has sought to be an inclusive document that is fair for all

### **Sustainability Implications**

16. It is considered that the new approach will provide sustainability benefits such as:
  - Greater benefits to the overall biodiversity within Oxfordshire by having corridors whereby insects and bats can live in a less invaded manner.



## CA11

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