



***Delegated Decisions by Deputy Leader of the Council
with Responsibility for Climate Change, Environment &
Future Generations***

***Thursday, 14 November 2024 at 2.30 pm
County Hall, New Road, Oxford OX1 1ND***

If you wish to view proceedings, please click on this [Live Stream Link](#).
However, that will not allow you to participate in the meeting.

Items for Decision

The items for decision under individual Cabinet Members' delegated powers are listed overleaf, with indicative timings, and the related reports are attached. Decisions taken will become effective at the end of the working day on 22 November 2024 unless called in by that date for review by the appropriate Scrutiny Committee.

Copies of the reports are circulated (by e-mail) to all members of the County Council.

These proceedings are open to the public

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Reeves".

Martin Reeves
Chief Executive

November 2024

Committee Officer: **Jack Ahier**
email: jack.ahier@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Note: Date of next meeting: 12 December 2024

If you have any special requirements (such as a large print version of these papers or special access facilities) please contact the officer named on the front page, but please give as much notice as possible before the meeting.

Items for Decision

1. Declarations of Interest

See guidance below.

2. Questions from County Councillors

Any county councillor may, by giving notice to the Proper Officer by 9 am two working days before the meeting, ask a question on any matter in respect of the Cabinet Member's delegated powers.

The number of questions which may be asked by any councillor at any one meeting is limited to two (or one question with notice and a supplementary question at the meeting) and the time for questions will be limited to 30 minutes in total. As with questions at Council, any questions which remain unanswered at the end of this item will receive a written response.

Questions submitted prior to the agenda being despatched are shown below and will be the subject of a response from the appropriate Cabinet Member or such other councillor or officer as is determined by the Cabinet Member, and shall not be the subject of further debate at this meeting. Questions received after the despatch of the agenda, but before the deadline, will be shown on the Schedule of Addenda circulated at the meeting, together with any written response which is available at that time.

3. Petitions and Public Address

Members of the public who wish to speak at this meeting can attend the meeting in person or 'virtually' through an online connection. To facilitate 'hybrid' meetings we are asking that requests to speak are submitted by no later than 9.00 a.m. four working days before the meeting. Requests to speak should be sent to committeesdemocraticservices@oxfordshire.gov.uk

If you are speaking 'virtually', you may submit a written statement of your presentation to ensure that, if the technology fails, your views can still be taken into account. A written copy of your statement can be provided no later than 9.00 a.m. two working days before the meeting. Written submissions should be no longer than one A4 sheet.

4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting (Pages 1 - 2)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2024 and to be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

5. Dark Skies - Street Lighting Illumination Proposals (Pages 3 - 32)

Cabinet Member: Deputy Leader of the Council with Responsibility for Climate Change, Environment and Future Generations

Forward Plan Ref: 2024/299

Contact: Matt Archer, Portfolio Manager: Central Programme Delivery
(Matt.Archer@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Report by Director of Environment and Highways (**CMDDLC5**).

The Deputy Leader is **RECOMMENDED** to:

- a) **Approve the proposed Highway Street Lighting Profiles, specifically with regard to operational hours and illumination levels as set out in this paper.**

6. Household Waste Recycling Centre Network: Introduction of Booking System (Pages 33 - 40)

Cabinet Member: Deputy Leader of the Council with Responsibility for Climate Change, Environment and Future Generations

Forward Plan Ref: 2024/269

Contact: Rachel Townsend, Circular Economy Projects Officer
(Rachel.Townsend@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Report by Director of Environment and Highways (**CMDDLC6**).

The Deputy Leader is **RECOMMENDED** to:

- a) **Approve the introduction of booking systems at Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs), supported by the provision of Meet and Greet site staff.**
- b) **Delegate authority to the Director of Environment and Highways in consultation with the Head of Legal Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer to agree modifications to the existing HWRC contracts with the contractors and enter into any necessary agreements.**

Councillors declaring interests

General duty

You must declare any disclosable pecuniary interests when the meeting reaches the item on the agenda headed 'Declarations of Interest' or as soon as it becomes apparent to you.

What is a disclosable pecuniary interest?

Disclosable pecuniary interests relate to your employment; sponsorship (i.e. payment for expenses incurred by you in carrying out your duties as a councillor or towards your election expenses); contracts; land in the Council's area; licenses for land in the Council's area; corporate tenancies; and securities. These declarations must be recorded in each councillor's Register of Interests which is publicly available on the Council's website.

Disclosable pecuniary interests that must be declared are not only those of the member her or himself but also those member's spouse, civil partner or person they are living with as husband or wife or as if they were civil partners.

Declaring an interest

Where any matter disclosed in your Register of Interests is being considered at a meeting, you must declare that you have an interest. You should also disclose the nature as well as the existence of the interest. If you have a disclosable pecuniary interest, after having declared it at the meeting you must not participate in discussion or voting on the item and must withdraw from the meeting whilst the matter is discussed.

Members' Code of Conduct and public perception

Even if you do not have a disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter, the Members' Code of Conduct says that a member 'must serve only the public interest and must never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person including yourself' and that 'you must not place yourself in situations where your honesty and integrity may be questioned'.

Members Code – Other registrable interests

Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to the financial interest or wellbeing of one of your other registerable interests then you must declare an interest. You must not participate in discussion or voting on the item and you must withdraw from the meeting whilst the matter is discussed.

Wellbeing can be described as a condition of contentedness, healthiness and happiness; anything that could be said to affect a person's quality of life, either positively or negatively, is likely to affect their wellbeing.

Other registrable interests include:

- a) Any unpaid directorships

- b) Any body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority.
- c) Any body (i) exercising functions of a public nature (ii) directed to charitable purposes or (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management.

Members Code – Non-registrable interests

Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to your financial interest or wellbeing (and does not fall under disclosable pecuniary interests), or the financial interest or wellbeing of a relative or close associate, you must declare the interest.

Where a matter arises at a meeting which affects your own financial interest or wellbeing, a financial interest or wellbeing of a relative or close associate or a financial interest or wellbeing of a body included under other registrable interests, then you must declare the interest.

In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied:

Where a matter affects the financial interest or well-being:

- a) to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;
- b) a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest.

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.

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Agenda Item 4

DELEGATED DECISIONS BY DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR CLIMATE CHANGE, ENVIRONMENT & FUTURE GENERATIONS

MINUTES of the meeting held on Thursday, 10 October 2024 commencing at 2.30 pm and finishing at 2.35 pm

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Dr Pete Sudbury – in the Chair

Officers: Jack Ahier (Democratic Services Officer), Roger Seed (Operational Manager – Waste and Circular Economy).

The Deputy Leader of the Council considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting [, together with a schedule of addenda tabled at the meeting/the following additional documents:] and agreed as set out below. Copies of the agenda and reports [agenda, reports and schedule/additional documents] are attached to the signed Minutes.

16 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

(Agenda No. 1)

There were none.

17 **QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS**

(Agenda No. 2)

There were none.

18 **PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS**

(Agenda No. 3)

There were none.

19 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

(Agenda No. 4)

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2024 were approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

20 **INCINERATION OF WASTE UPHOLSTERED DOMESTIC SEATING CONTAINING PERSISTENT ORGANIC POLLUTANTS - CONTRACT VARIATION**

(Agenda No. 5)

The Chair introduced the item to the meeting.

The Chair noted that this was a good example of policy being developed at short notice due to the Environment Agency activating guidance.

The Chair thanked officers for their work, noted that the guidance would be continually monitored for changes, and agreed to the recommendations.

RESOLVED to:

- a) Approve the utilisation of the residual waste treatment contract for the treatment of Waste Upholstered Domestic Seating containing Persistent Organic Pollutants and,**
- b) Delegate authority to the Director of Environment and Highways in Consultation with the Head of Legal Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer to enter into any necessary documentation with Viridor Oxfordshire Limited to secure such utilisation**

..... in the Chair

Date of signing

Divisions Affected - All

**DELEGATED DECISIONS BY DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL
WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR CLIMATE CHANGE, ENVIRONMENT,
AND FUTURE GENERATIONS**

14 NOVEMBER 2024

Dark Skies – Street Lighting Illumination Proposals

Report by the Director for Environment and Highways

RECOMMENDATION

The Deputy Leader is **RECOMMENDED** to:

- a) **Approve the proposed Highway Street Lighting Profiles, specifically with regard to operational hours and illumination levels as set out in this paper.**

Purpose of Report

- 1) Due to the level of expenditure required, and the number of divisions affected, this recommendation is considered to be a Key Decision.
- 2) The purpose of this report is to present and seek approval for a proposed new approach to the provision of street lighting operated by the County Council in support of an initiative to improve 'Dark Skies' in Oxfordshire.

Executive Summary

- 3) The County Council, in its capacity as the highway authority, operates approximately 60,000 streetlights across the county.
- 4) There is a default presumption that street lighting is only provided where deemed to be demonstrably necessary in line with existing policy.
- 5) Where a need has been identified and street lighting has been provided, or is to be provided in the future, the proposed lighting profiles for hours of operation of those lights would apply as set out in this paper.

- 6) It is proposed to change the operational hours of a large (majority) proportion of the street lighting stock to positively contribute towards organisational objectives concerning carbon emissions and the climate emergency.
- 7) It is anticipated that the scheme, once fully implemented, will reduce energy consumption by over 5,000 kWh per day, and realise an annual reduction in carbon emissions and energy expenditure of over 400tCO₂e¹ and £400k² respectively.

Background

- 8) The County Council, in its capacity as the highway authority, operates approximately 60,000 streetlights across the county.
- 9) Notwithstanding that some variances in operation do already exist across the county, it is typically the case that where street lighting exists it is operational all throughout the hours of darkness.
- 10) The level (intensity) of street lighting when operational is primarily dictated by the designation of the road on which the light is installed; being designated either as a;
 - a. *Residential Road*, of which there are approximately 45,000 lights. On these roads frontage development and the surrounding area is made up predominately of residential dwellings and with lighting columns typically under 6m in heightOR
 - b. *Traffic / Connecting Route*, of which there are approximately 15,000 lights. On these roads the primary function of the road is to link settlements or to distribute traffic around a settlement / locality. These are often referred to as 'main' or 'busy' roads and will have a mixed frontage development and lighting columns typically over 8m in height.
- 11) Commissioned by the Department for Transport, *Well Managed Highway Infrastructure*; a national code of practice (CoP) for the management and maintenance of highway assets was published in 2016 and applies across the United Kingdom.
- 12) The CoP promotes a risk-based approach to managing highway infrastructure, including for that of street lighting, and is a concept with which many are already familiar, and which has long been applied to a range of highway management/maintenance activities in Oxfordshire. These include but are not

¹ Based on kWh conversion factor of 0.22535

² Based on an assumed cost of 23p/kWh

limited to, the precautionary winter salting of roads, the prioritisation & remediation of highway defects, and the cleansing of highway gullies.

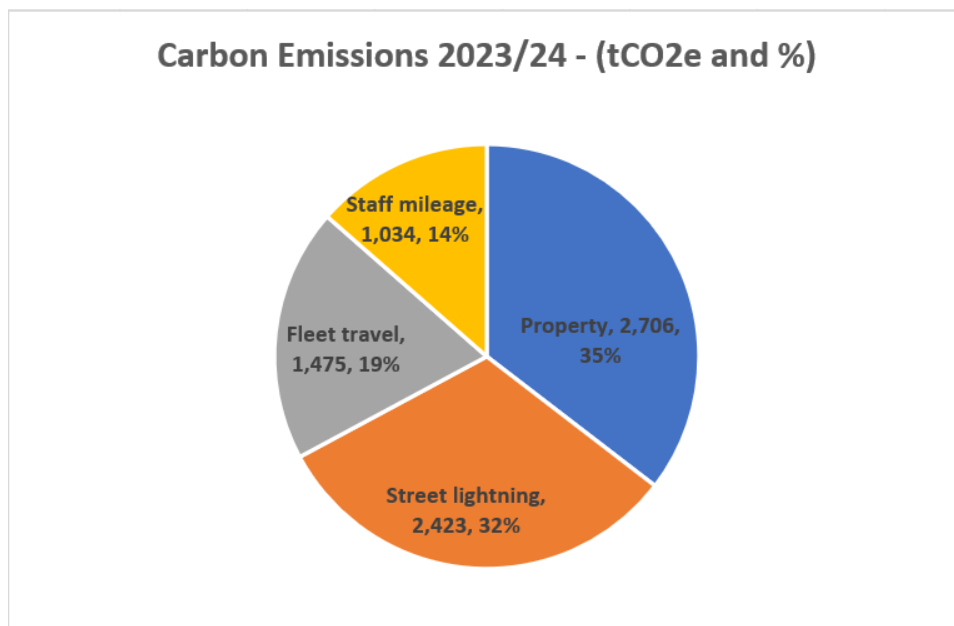
- 13) Within the CoP, the first objective of Part D, which deals with street lighting is, “*to encourage delivery of the right quality and amount of light in the right place and at the right time*”.
- 14) The CoP acknowledges that lighting like other highway services should be tailored, with service levels being applied commensurate with local needs, priorities, and affordability.
- 15) Schemes or initiatives to operate street lighting at a reduced level, or over only a certain period of the night are often referred to as ‘Part Night Lighting’ (PNL).
- 16) PNL may or may not include other lighting-based innovations such as adjusting the colour & intensity of the light, or connectivity of lighting with other public realm infrastructure.

Proposal

- 17) It is proposed to introduce a new standard for how street lighting is operated across the county (if justified to be required at all), that;
 - a. Minimises the provision (coverage, duration, and intensity) of street lighting to best meet the varying needs of the authority and the network;
 - b. Allows for reasonable diversity of lighting provision to accommodate local requirements;
 - c. Whilst diverse, it is nevertheless observably consistent in its application across the county, and avoids a proliferation of bespoke lighting profiles;
 - d. Is consistent with the substantiated expectations of network users;
 - e. Consolidates existing variances in street lighting across the county
 - f. Is both needs and risk-based.
- 18) The proposed approach seeks to accommodate the positive aspects of street lighting whilst reducing its detrimental impact on the environment and its burden on council resources by better tailoring its duration and intensity.
- 19) All streetlighting for which the County Council has a responsibility for would be within the scope of this initiative.
- 20) Notwithstanding that there are several variants to the proposal, the default and majority position for street lighting under these proposals is that it will operate between dusk - 11pm, and 6:30am - dawn each day, switching off between 11pm

and 6:30am, rather than remaining on all night as most lights typically found across the county do currently.

- 21) Annexe A details the most typical street lighting scenarios across the county and the proposed new operational details (Lighting Profiles) for each.
- 22) Several exclusions / exemptions are included in the proposal whereby lighting would remain on all night. Examples include those lighting alleyways and paths divorced from the carriageway, in subways and where they are required to illuminate certain highway features such as road humps.
- 23) Street lighting is the largest single contributor to the County Council's operational carbon emissions, generating over 2,423 tCO₂e in 2023/24. See figure below for a breakdown of Council emissions.



- 24) The *Campaign for the Protection of Rural England* (CPRE), and *Buglife* both report the negative impact that artificial nighttime light has on wildlife. Some birds, mammals, and a wide range of invertebrates can all be negatively affected.
- 25) Artificial light is reported to negatively affect the migration, mating, feeding, navigating, development, and reproduction of that wildlife with a detrimental effect on the nocturnal pollination of flowers.

Reason for Change

- 26) The proposal is primarily intended and focussed on reducing artificial nighttime light in Oxfordshire.

- 27) Light pollution would be significantly reduced during the affected hours which could reduce the negative impact of artificial light on some wildlife. Each light that is switched off overnight would be illuminated for at least 1,500 fewer hours each year.
- 28) Another important environmental benefit of the proposal is a significant reduction in carbon emissions.
- 29) It is anticipated that the scheme, once fully implemented, will reduce energy consumption by over 5,000 kWh per day, and realise an annual reduction in carbon emissions of over 400tCO₂e³.
- 30) Additionally, the proposal when fully implemented is estimated to reduce annual revenue expenditure on energy by over £400k⁴.

Precedent for Change

- 31) Oxfordshire is not alone in adapting its services to cater for an improved condition with regard to lighting. The draft *Joint Local Plan 2041* for the districts of both South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse includes specific policy measures relating to light pollution and dark skies which seek to ensure that lighting has a clear need and justification, and is the minimum appropriate for its purpose.
- 32) Similarly, Cherwell District Council's draft *Local Plan 2040* also has a specific policy around light pollution and reducing its negative impacts.
- 33) Many local highway authorities across the county have, to varying extents, made changes to the operational hours and levels of illumination of their street lighting stock in pursuit of similar benefits and outcomes as this project seeks to achieve for Oxfordshire.
- 34) At its time of publication, the *Well Managed Highway Infrastructure CoP* acknowledged that local Highway Authorities had been reducing levels of street lighting even prior to the code having been published.
- 35) In their *2020 State of the Nation Streetlighting Survey*, the UK Roads Liaison Group (UKRLG) reported that 116 or 55% of Councils across the UK operated a part night policy, and 198 (or nearly all) authorities operated some form of part night dimming.
- 36) Some of those schemes have been around for many years. A part night lighting scheme has been operated in West Sussex since the 1970s. Most schemes in the country though have been introduced in the last 20 years.
- 37) Whilst a great deal of precedent therefore exists, the 2020 UKRLG survey reports that there is a wide spread of lighting profiles used to manage lantern operation, and no specific profile dominates across the UK. Instead, scheme specifics are

³ Based on kWh conversion factor of 0.22535

⁴ Based on an assumed cost of 23p/kWh

bespoke to meet the needs of each respective authority (as recommended by the CoP).

- 38) Other Highway Authorities continue to implement or extend schemes of reduced highway lighting. Leicestershire County Council, which implemented their part night lighting scheme in 2010, have more recently approved in December 2023 a further reduction of the intensity of their lighting to 30%, taking effect from 8pm each evening (initially on an 18month trial period).

Corporate Policies and Priorities

- 39) The proposed initiative will contribute to the County Councils Priorities concerning the Climate Emergency.
- 40) Reducing the energy consumption of Street Lighting is a key contributor to achieving commitments made in the Climate Action Plan to be a net zero authority by 2030.

Financial Implications

- 41) The works are estimated to require a capital investment of approximately £2.2m, which exists within the allocated capital budget for Street Lighting Adaptation.
- 42) Funding to install apparatus that would allow changes to be made to the operational hours of street lighting was approved as a part of the wider business case in 2018 to convert street lighting to operate on LED lanterns, and to renew life expiring street lighting columns.
- 43) No additional capital funding is required to deliver the project.
- 44) The ordinary budget controls of all capital expenditure will be observed and adhered to throughout the delivery of the project.
- 45) The proposed changes will result in a reduction in the revenue cost of operating the street lighting stock. It is anticipated that once the scheme has been fully implemented this saving would be over £400k⁵ per year.
- 46) The changes also further serve to avoid costs which may otherwise be incurred should the cost of energy increase in the future.

Comments checked by:

Filipp Skiffins, Assistant Finance Business Partner
filipp.skiffins@oxfordshire.gov.uk

⁵ Based on an assumed cost of 23p/kWh

Legal Implications

47) Various legislation / guidance has been considered, including;

- a. Section 97 of the *Highways Act 1980* gives the County Council the power to provide street lighting.
- b. Regulation 5 of *The Highways (Road Humps) Regulations 1999* requires that road humps are illuminated.
- c. Section 17 of the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* places on the County Council the duty to consider crime and disorder implications of exercising its various functions.
- d. Section 39 of the *Road Traffic Act 1988* imposes upon the County Council a responsibility for taking measures to prevent road traffic accidents.
- e. The *Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016* require some traffic signs to be directly illuminated when within a system of street lighting. Traffic sign illumination will not be affected by this initiative.
- f. The design requirements in BS 5489 allow road lighting levels to be lowered during periods of low traffic volumes

48) Notwithstanding each the above, there is no general requirement or obligation to light the highway.

49) The proposed changes to the operational provision of street lighting are within the powers of the County Council.

50) Legal compliance with, and mitigation for both the direct and indirect implications of the proposed changes are to be ensured through the strategic and risk-based application of the initiative as is set out in the proposed Lighting Profiles.

Comments checked by:

Jennifer Crouch, Head of Law & LBP Environmental
jennifer.crouch@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Staff Implications

51) There are no impacts on permanent staff positions in the service.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

- 52) The initiative would be applied across all divisions in the County.
- 53) The initiative would most prominently affect those using the network during hours when street lighting is not operational.
- 54) Anecdotal concerns have been raised in other authorities that the scheme disadvantages shift workers and others who may have a need to use the network at those times.
- 55) Whilst it is accepted that there will always be a level of demand on the network 24hrs a day, the number of users at the times of the proposed reduction in street lighting is relatively low.
- 56) Several risk-based exclusions are proposed to reduce the likelihood of negative experiences by network users.
- 57) Maintaining the full lighting provision would be disproportionate to the substantiated need and risk of those affected by the proposals.
- 58) An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed and accompanies this report in ANNEXE 5.

Sustainability Implications

- 59) The initiative makes a significant contribution to the sustainability of the service through reduced carbon emissions and an improved environmental condition with respect to artificial nighttime light.

Risk Management

- 60) Notwithstanding the many benefits of the proposal, it is recognised that any changes to the provision of street lighting have the potential for negative or otherwise unintended consequences.
- 61) Most notable and widely perceived with respect to risks for this project are the impacts on road safety and crime / the fear of crime.
- 62) Personal safety is a particular matter of concern for many with initiatives of PNL.
- 63) The intuitive and almost natural preference for lighting based on a perception of improved observation of hazards and improved surveillance is readily understandable, and seemingly logical and rational.
- 64) Given the significant number of authorities that have already implemented PNL schemes, some for many years, there is a large body of evidence that the County Council has considered prior to developing its own proposals.

- 65) The evidence is positive, supportive, and demonstrates that whilst concerns are real, there is rarely substantive evidence of any actual increase in crime or traffic collisions as a result of introducing PNL.
- 66) See ANNEXE 2 for a summary of some of the case studies reviewed.
- 67) Carefully considered and strategically implemented PNL initiatives are therefore able to make significant environmental benefits without being unduly detrimental to society.
- 68) The County Council has proposed several criteria for where lights will be exempt from a change to their hours of operation, and which serve to mitigate negative impacts the scheme might otherwise have had. These can be seen in ANNEXE 1.

Operational Delivery Risks

- 69) Operational risks affecting works delivery such as inclement weather will be managed through the pre-existing governance structure for the service.
- 70) The nature of the work involved is routine with pre-existing procedures in place for effective management.

Consultation

Consultation

- 71) The County Council has an approved policy concerning Electrical Highway Assets, including that of Street Lighting. The policy endorses dimming of streetlights during low traffic periods and a reduction in the operating hours of streetlights.
- 72) The County Council will not formally consult upon, nor seek comments regarding the overall proposal of part night lighting, or the composition of the proposed lighting profiles.
- 73) It is considered that there is sufficient precedent across the country, over a sustained period of many years, and with a strong supporting evidence base for positive outcomes which has already been carried out by peer authorities, industry bodies, and academic organisations.
- 74) It is not considered that Oxfordshire has any inherent attributes, or a network or demographic of any significant difference to those other parts of the country that would warrant or justify a protracted consultation or trial.
- 75) The concept of part night lighting is at this time considered to be an industry standard option.
- 76) Where lights are assessed to no longer be required, and where their permanent de-illumination is recommended, this will be done in full consultation with the relevant Town / Parish Council etc.

77) See ANNEXE 4 for further information on planned engagement with local communities, and how they will be invited to assist the Council in determining the scheme by scheme specification.

Paul Fermer
Director of Environment and Highways

Annex: 1. OCC Lighting Profiles
 2. Case Studies
 3. PNL Risk Based Exclusion Criteria
 4. Engagement
 5. Equalities Impact Assessment

Background papers: N/A

Contact Officer: Matt Archer (Portfolio Manager; Central Programme Delivery, Highway Maintenance)

November 2024

ANNEXE A - Lighting Profiles

Route Type	Treatment	Profile ID	20:00	20:30	21:00	21:30	22:00	22:30	23:00	23:30
Residential	PNL + Dimming*	1	100	100	100	100	50	50	0	0
Traffic			100	100	100	100	100	100	0	0
Residential	Dimming only*	2a	100	100	100	100	50	50	50	50
Traffic		2b	100	100	100	100	100	100	75	75
All	N/A	3								
All	N/A	4								

*Nb: Dimming of lights is already in place and operates as per the profiles set out in this chart. Th
 Nb: Dusk and Dawn times will vary throughout the year

00:00	00:30	01:00	01:30	02:00	02:30	03:00	03:30	04:00	04:30	05:00	05:30	06:00	06:30	07:00
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	100	100
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	100	100
50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	100	100	100	100
75	75	75	75	75	75	75	75	75	75	75	75	100	100	100
Not Included in this Phase														
Not affected by this initiative														

ere is no proposed change to existing levels of dimming.

ANNEX 2 – Case Studies

- 1) The UK College of Policing promotes Street Lighting as being effective in reducing crime.
- 2) The Cambridge Research Group (CRG) though remark that an inference cannot be drawn from evidence pointing towards the benefits in crime reduction of streetlights being introduced that withdrawing lighting would result in a reverse effect, and that within published research there is no evidence for such a conclusion.
- 3) Indeed, the paper on which the College of Policing advice is based “*did not consider the impact on crime of recent changes in lighting technology, such as the introduction of LED lamps, or changes in lighting schedules such as part-night lighting*”. This is noted by the College as a consideration on their website.
- 4) The 2015 LANTERNS (Local Authority collaborators’ National Evaluation of Reduced Night-time Streetlight) project looked at data on road traffic collisions and crime in 62 local authorities in England and Wales.
- 5) The results provided no evidence that switch off, part-night lighting, dimming, or white light adaptations to street lighting were associated with night-time traffic collisions.
- 6) The results also provide no evidence that these lighting strategies are associated with an increase in crime at an area level.

Local Authorities – Warwickshire County Council

- 7) A Warwickshire County Council (WCC) Overview & Scrutiny Committee paper in 2019 reported that since part-night lighting was implemented in 2012/13, several analytical exercises had been undertaken to understand whether there was an impact on crime during the hours the lighting is off.
- 8) The paper cites reports from November 2013, July 2014 and September 2015 along with additional pieces of work looking at specific areas of the County. All these exercises reportedly concluded that there is no evidence to support a link between the WCC Lighting Policy and rates of crime.
- 9) Similarly, the WCC paper states that analysis conducted on levels of reported Road Traffic Injuries operating part night lighting for over five years shows that there has not been any statistically significant change in reported Road Traffic Injury incidents.

Local Authorities – Leicestershire County Council

- 10) A Leicestershire County Council paper in 2016 reported that their evidence showed that part-night lighting had no overall detrimental effect on crime or road traffic collisions. In fact, for 97% of the County’s population, crime decreased more in part-lit areas than it did in areas where there was no change to street lighting

- 11) The only exception to this was found to be for “Constrained City Dwellers”; a proportion of the population as defined by census survey data. The County Council’s analysis found that this group experienced an increase in crime through the period of the introduction of part night lighting. At the time of the report the group reportedly accounted for 2.4% (15,898 people) of the Leicestershire population.

Local Authorities – Lincolnshire County Council

- 12) A 2018 report by Lincolnshire County Council records that there had been no noticeable change in the number of overnight burglary, vehicle and personal robbery offences across the county as reported by Lincolnshire Police.
- 13) The number of reported criminal damage offences had increased, although not consistently across the county and that it could not be concluded that street lighting had impacted on levels of criminal damage recorded.

Local Authorities – Southampton City Council

- 14) In February 2023 Southampton City Council implemented part night lighting. The Council reports that having carefully monitored the impacts of the part-night lighting initiative with Hampshire Constabulary, no noticeable rises in criminal activities or changes in policing issues were found.
- 15) Southampton City Council are now extending their hours of non-illumination from 01:00-04:00hrs to 01:00-05:30hrs.

Police Forces – Leicestershire Police

- 16) Intelligence Analysts at Leicestershire Police undertook a review of crime and anti-social behaviour in Leicester Forest East in 2014 and found no evidence of an increase in crime or any change in the pattern of recorded crime that could be attributed to part night lighting.

Police Forces – Essex Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner (PFCC)

- 17) A report commissioned by the office of the PFCC for Essex concluded that there is no evidence of a relationship between part night lighting and levels of crime, anti-social behaviour or road traffic accidents resulting in death or serious injury in areas where part night lighting had been adopted, when compared with control areas that never took up the initiative. The report goes on to state that these findings support previous research conducted by Essex Police.

Police Forces – Lincolnshire Police

- 18) A 2017 report by the Lincolnshire Police found no connection between varying levels of crime and the introduction of part night lighting.

Part Night Lighting Reversals

- 19) Some local authorities have reversed either wholly or in part their decisions to implement part night lighting.

- 20) Nottinghamshire County Council, who implemented a part night scheme in 2010 opted to turn their lights back to all night operation in 2013 after concerns around the perceived risk of crime and personal safety from residents.
- 21) Similarly, a 2015 consultation by Kent County Council found that when given the option residents expressed a preference for a return to all night lighting, which was subsequently enacted by the Council.
- 22) Cambridgeshire also reverted street lighting to be illuminated all night due to concerns of safety after only a few months of implementation, despite their own research showing no such evidence of a link to crime.
- 23) Derbyshire County Council started a programme of part night lighting in 2012, but stopped implementation of the measures in 2015. The majority of the lights already converted at that point continue to operate without being reversed. DCC state that they have monitored crime and accident statistics since the start of the project. Despite them reportedly receiving a low level of complaints and a lack of evidence to link those concerns with increases in crime or accidents, the Council has nevertheless opted not extend the scheme since.

Police Requests

- 24) Several instances of very local reversals across the country have occurred as a direct request from the Police. These reversals vary from temporary to permanent and are locally restricted instances rather than being wide.

Fear of Crime

- 25) Clearly the incidence of increased fear of crime, or for personal safety is real as has been experienced by other authorities that embarked earlier in implementing PNL based initiatives.
- 26) It seems that even in the absence of firm evidence to substantiate those feelings, they have been nevertheless sufficient for some authorities to pause, stop, or reverse the implementation of part night lighting schemes.

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ANNEX 3 – PNL Risk Based Exclusion Criteria

Tailoring

To provide an identifiably consistent regime across the county, the operational hours of lights will not be uniquely or individually tailored. Instead, the different lighting scenarios detailed in this document will be applied at the Council's discretion to best align with the environment in each given locality.

Exemptions

In the following circumstances, the County Council may exempt some existing lights from part night lighting;

Scenario	Profile ID	Description of features present
Subways / Underpasses	4	A grade separated route for non-motorised traffic.
Road-Rail Crossings	2a, 2b	Where the OCC highway / PRow network has an at grade interface (crossing) with a rail line, regardless of the operator of that line.
Traffic Calming	2a, 2b	A vertical feature in the vehicle running lane to slow or impede traffic. E.g. Speed humps, rising bollards, etc. May extend to horizontal traffic calming at OCC discretion such as build outs, chicanes, centre refuges etc where lighting already exists.
Significant road narrowing / intrusions projecting into the carriageway	2a, 2b	Where the road narrows suddenly, unexpectedly, or to a degree that it requires the driver to take some form of evasive or precautionary action. Examples may include narrow bridges (over or under).
Controlled crossing points	2a, 2b	Formally controlled crossing point e.g. Zebra, Pelican, Puffin, Toucan etc.
Town centres supporting a night-time economy	3	Extents to be determined on case-by-case basis by OCC. Qualifying criteria likely to include; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Multiple licensed properties staying open beyond 11pm. ○ May have operational taxi ranks / bus services.
Junctions with Highways England operated road network	2a, 2b	To include A34, M40, etc
Steps / Stairs / Gates	2a, 2b	Direct lighting of steps / stairs / gates and similar obstacles
Waterside paths	2a, 2b	Paths alongside exposed water (canals, rivers, etc)
Alleyways	2a, 2b	Paths divorced from the carriageway. Likely to be closely bordered with vertical features such as fencing or walls. Would include the entrance / exit points to the paths.

Local Authority / Police CCTV / ANPR	2a, 2b	CCTV for the purpose of public safety / crime detection & prevention etc. Does not include private CCTV networks (e.g. on shops / industrial estates etc). May not apply where OCC is advised that the camera technology is capable of satisfactory operation in dark environments.
Designated Junctions / Links	2a, 2b	Significant, complex junctions as designated by OCC. Likely to be predominately rural areas with at least one adjoining road with a speed limit of 50mph or more, or where merging traffic may present an increased risk (e.g. a large roundabout circulatory). Would also include junctions featuring a STOP line. May include specific points along a route remote from junctions.
Known RTC locations	2a, 2b	Where there is a recorded, notable, and relevant increase, or pattern of traffic collisions resulting in personal injury during the affected hours of darkness. i.e. a clear trend over 5+years, and excluding instances influenced by external factors such as drug/alcohol driver impairment.

ANNEX 4 - Engagement

Key Stakeholders

- 1) Whilst formal consultation will not be undertaken on the principles of reduced street lighting, key stakeholders will be invited to engage with the County Council when implementing each scheme.
- 2) The Town / Parish Council etc will be invited to review a proposal prepared by the County Council and make recommendations / comments based on local knowledge and community feedback.
- 3) Likewise, Thames Valley Police and District Council Community Safety departments will be asked to contribute to designating the extent of lighting considered to be in support of a nighttime economy such as that of Oxford City Centre.

Elected Council Members

- 4) County Council Members will be notified in advance of the works commencing in their respective division.

Members of the Public

- 5) A public facing campaign to raise awareness of the changes will be launched prior to delivery commencing. This will be done through the ordinary promotional channels of the County Council, including a dedicated page that will be made available on the County Council's website.
- 6) A notice of information will be affixed to each lighting column advising of the changes made and directing the reader to the County Council's website for further information.
- 7) Customers will be able to contact the County Council with queries or concerns, each of which will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Contact will be via the County Council's existing channels such as the Customer Contact Centre, and through web-form submission on the County Council's dedicated Street Lighting webpage.
- 8) Between 19 June 2024 and 21 July 2024, the County Council ran an interactive tool, encouraging residents and stakeholders to take on the role of councillors and create a balanced budget for 2025/26.
- 9) Residents and stakeholders were prompted to think about:
 - What services matter to you most?
 - Which services do you think we should protect?
 - Which services do you think we could reduce?
 - Would you raise council tax?
- 10) Just over half of respondents (52%) indicated support for a reduction in funding for street lighting in favour of other services.

- 11) Several comments received in the written section of the response suggested reducing street lighting to save costs and reduce light pollution. *“Switch the lights off after midnight, less light pollution, more environmentally friendly and a lower bill of running them.”*
- 12) Whilst this survey was not a direct gauge of public opinion for a reduction in street lighting, it does indicate that there is a willingness to reduce the provision of street lighting in the pursuit of improved or maintained levels of service for other Council functions.
- 13) Recent comments received during the planning process for the proposed Watlington Relief Road, which expressed objection to the provision of street lighting on the new road suggest further support for a highway environment that is not lit to what has previously been provided.



Oxfordshire County Council
Equalities Impact Assessment

Dark Skies – Street Lighting Proposals

November 2024

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Section 1: Summary details

Directorate and Service Area	Highway Maintenance - Environment & Highways
What is being assessed (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change).	Street Lighting Illumination in support of Dark Skies
Is this a new or existing function or policy?	New initiative under pre-existing policy concerning electrical assets and street lighting
Summary of assessment Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change. Summarise possible impacts. Does the proposal bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community? (following completion of the assessment).	The initiative being assessed will see a majority of OCC operated highway street lights be converted to operate for a reduced number of hours. Affected streetlights will be converted to switch off between the hours of 11pm and 6:30am each night.
Completed By	Matt Archer - Portfolio Manager; Central Programme Delivery
Authorised By	Sean Rooney
Date of Assessment	November 2024

Section 2: Detail of proposal

<p>Context / Background</p> <p>Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions.</p>	<p>The County Council, in its capacity as the highway authority, operates approximately 60,000 streetlights across the county.</p> <p>The proposed initiative seeks to accommodate the positive aspects of street lighting whilst reducing its detrimental impact on the environment and its burden on council resources by better tailoring its duration and intensity.</p> <p>Light pollution would be significantly reduced during the affected hours which could reduce the negative impact of artificial light on some wildlife. Each light that is switched off overnight would be illuminated for at least 1,500 fewer hours each year.</p> <p>Another important environmental benefit of the proposal is a significant reduction in carbon emissions.</p> <p>It is anticipated that the scheme, once fully implemented, will reduce energy consumption by over 5,000 kWh per day, and realise an annual reduction in carbon emissions of over 400tCO₂e.</p> <p>Additionally, the proposal when fully implemented is estimated to reduce annual revenue expenditure on energy by over £400k</p>
<p>Proposals</p> <p>Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action.</p>	<p>Notwithstanding that there are several variants to the proposal, the default and majority position for street lighting under these proposals is that it will operate between dusk - 11pm, and 6:30am - dawn each day, switching off between 11pm and 6:30am, rather than remaining on all night as most lights typically found across the county do currently.</p> <p>Several exclusions / exemptions are included in the proposal whereby lighting would remain on all night. Examples include those lighting alleyways and paths divorced from the carriageway, in subways and where they are required to illuminate certain highway features such as road humps.</p> <p>The proposals are the most effective method of improving 'Dark Skies' within Oxfordshire that can be made from county council operated highway assets, with no other alternative being able to make a sufficiently significant contribution.</p>

<p>Evidence / Intelligence</p> <p>List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback from service users and stakeholders etc, that supports your proposals and can help to inform the judgements you make about potential impact on different individuals, communities or groups and our ability to deliver our climate commitments.</p>	<p>A significant number of authorities have already implemented similar initiatives, some for many years. As such, there is a large body of evidence that the County Council has considered prior to developing its own proposals.</p> <p>It is considered that there is sufficient precedent across the country, over a sustained period of many years, and with a strong supporting evidence base for positive outcomes which has already been carried out by peer authorities, industry bodies, and academic organisations.</p> <p>Several criteria have been proposed where lights will be exempt from a change to their hours of operation, and which serve to mitigate negative impacts the scheme might otherwise have had.</p> <p>As the initiative is implemented, affected Town/Parish Councils, as well as other key stakeholders including the Police will be invited to comment on the detail of the rollout in each community.</p>
<p>Alternatives considered / rejected</p> <p>Summarise any other approaches that have been considered in developing the policy or proposed service change, and the reasons why these were not adopted. This could include reasons why doing nothing is not an option.</p>	<p>There are limited options available to improve the night time environment with respect to Dark Skies and highway street lighting. Whilst further dimming of lights was considered as an alternative to switching lights off, this is not considered to achieve the objectives of reducing night time artificial light.</p> <p>The environment / climate emergency is one recognised by the County Council, and this initiative is a key contributor to a broader suite of initiatives to reduce the impact of the Council's operations on the same and to utilise the influence / impact of its assets in a positive way.</p>

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics

Protected Characteristic	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Age	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Disability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Gender Reassignment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Marriage & Civil Partnership	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Pregnancy & Maternity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Race	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Sex	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Sexual Orientation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Religion or Belief	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts

Additional community impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Rural communities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Armed Forces	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Carers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Areas of deprivation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Wider Impacts

Additional Wider Impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Staff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Other Council Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Providers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Social Value ¹	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

¹ If the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 applies to this proposal, please summarise here how you have considered how the contract might improve the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the relevant area

Section 4: Review

Where bias, negative impact or disadvantage is identified, the proposal and/or implementation can be adapted or changed; meaning there is a need for regular review. This review may also be needed to reflect additional data and evidence for a fuller assessment (proportionate to the decision in question). Please state the agreed review timescale for the identified impacts of the policy implementation or service change.

Review Date	
Person Responsible for Review	
Authorised By	

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Divisions Affected - All

DELEGATED DECISIONS BY DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR CLIMATE CHANGE, ENVIRONMENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS

14 November 2024

Household Waste Recycling Centres – Implementation of a Booking System

Report by Director of Environment and Highways

RECOMMENDATION

The Deputy Leader is **RECOMMENDED** to

- a) **Approve the introduction of booking systems at Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs), supported by the provision of Meet and Greet site staff.**
- b) **Delegate authority to the Director of Environment and Highways in consultation with the Head of Legal Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer to agree modifications to the existing HWRC contracts with the contractors and enter into any necessary agreements.**

Executive Summary

1. The report outlines the immediate specific need and wider longer-term benefit of operating a booking system at Oxfordshire's HWRCs. The short-term need is the temporary closure of Redbridge to enable some urgent site safety works to be undertaken which is expected to place additional pressure at the other sites. The wider benefits anticipated are financial savings as a result of improved site operations and a reduction in total waste tonnages handled.
2. The Introduction of a booking system is also in line with other local authorities (including neighbouring ones). They have reported that they have received strong feedback that introducing this initiative along with other measures to control demand has led to greater success both in terms of financial savings, better environmental outcomes, and smoother operations on site.

Exempt Information

3. Not applicable.

Background/ Context

4. The introduction of a booking system will require residents to pre-book a timeslot prior to attending any of Oxfordshire's HWRCs. This will produce a financial saving to the authority as well as improve environmental outcomes by increasing recycling and reducing the amount of residual waste. These benefits shall primarily be achieved by enabling better management of customers using the service, but also through helping to minimise the potential for queues by managing site demand, especially during busier periods.
5. The HWRC sites should only be used by householders/ residents for their household waste, however it is believed there is substantial abuse of the system by commercial/ trade operators depositing waste free of charge. The Booking System could stop this trade abuse through the additional checks required to get a booking. In a similar way the system could be used to control use of the service by non-Oxfordshire residents. These two areas would generate savings through an overall reduction in waste handled on the sites and directing that waste which is handled on site away from the Energy Recovery Facility route.
6. On an immediate basis, Redbridge HWRC in Oxford will need to close for an anticipated 3 months for critical stabilisation work that cannot be avoided. This is provisionally programmed to begin in February 2025. Redbridge HWRC would expect around 40,000 customers over those 3 months, and it is expected that these customers will go to their nearest alternative site. The Booking System will greatly help manage this increased demand over and above normal levels at the other sites, meaning a reduction in queuing times, reduced local disruption and maintaining overall HWRC site performance.

Challenge

7. The network of 7 HWRCs meet the statutory requirement for the council to provide a location for Oxfordshire residents to dispose of their household waste. Having undertaken some discussions with other local authorities who have introduced Booking Systems, the service believes there is an opportunity to reduce demand and therefore costs at these sites. This is also important in the context of housing growth and the associated increased amount of household waste.
8. There is currently a residual waste container on each site where customers can dispose of unsorted (mixed) household waste and household waste for which there is no separate recycling on the sites. Site teams do their best to intercept waste that can be recycled before it is placed in this residual waste container, but this is not efficient under current operational practices. Demand management and maximising diversion of waste away from the residual waste

stream for disposal and into recycling and reuse are key measures to effectively control the cost of the HWRC service which is currently costing around £3.5m pa.

9. Analysis of the residual waste bin at the HWRCs has identified that up to 60% of the residual waste bin could be recycled either at the HWRC, or at the kerbside. Residual waste from the HWRCs is disposed of by energy recovery at high cost. Reducing the amount of residual waste disposed in this way is expected to present a significant cost saving to the authority.
10. In a public consultation carried out on the Let's Talk portal from July to September 2021, 1,290 out of 1,832 (70%) respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal that *"If a resident comes to a site with unsorted bags of mixed waste, they will be asked to sort it at the HWRC, so as much of it as possible can be reused or recycled"*. A Booking System would provide the right site operational conditions for the implementation of the sorting of this mixed waste.
11. The HWRC sites are provided for Oxfordshire residents to dispose of their own household waste however, unlike our neighbouring authorities and many others across the country, Oxfordshire does not limit use of HWRCs to Oxfordshire residents only, however most of the neighbouring authorities do restrict use of their sites to only their residents. The Council has evidence that out of county residents routinely come into Oxfordshire to use the HWRCs. Reasons for this are likely to be because of the closer proximity of Oxfordshire's sites to the resident's home irrespective of county boundaries, or to take advantage of different financial charges made for specific waste streams or different opening hours. Therefore, the Council has a situation where Oxfordshire residents are prevented from using neighbouring authority facilities, however their residents are still able to use those within Oxfordshire leading to increased service costs for the County.
12. Perhaps more significantly the Council is aware that commercial waste is illegally deposited at the sites by companies seeking to avoid paying for their trade waste. This waste is delivered in cars and vans and because it is similar in nature to genuine household waste it can be difficult to identify, prove and prevent this activity with our current control mechanisms.

Booking System Proposal

13. The introduction of a booking system would require all customers to book a timeslot online before travelling to a HWRC. This is already in place for customers who wish to use their free allocation of DIY waste, and this process works well.
14. The advantages of a booking system are:

- Better management of the flow of customers through our Household Waste Recycling Centre network, reducing queues which at times can be significant, causing local disruption.
 - Allowing the site teams more time to proactively assist customers and maximise the amount of material sent for recycling, rather than disposal as residual waste which is far more costly.
 - Enable direct, targeted communication to customers on matters relating to their scheduled visit.
 - Enable the authority to control cross border usage in future, potentially by only allowing Oxfordshire residents to make a booking, reducing the authority's exposure to those additional service costs.
 - Help with the identification and prevention of trade abuse by preventing commercial addresses from registering a booking, to enabling better analysis of data to identify unusual patterns of site usage for further investigation.
15. A significant number of local authorities introduced booking systems when facilities reopened following closure for 8 weeks during the Covid pandemic. It is noted that these authorities report that the quantity of waste they receive at the facilities has permanently reduced as a result, and that customers once they have become accustomed to the booking system have adjusted their behaviour accordingly and appreciate the lack of queues. As a result, many of these authorities have retained their booking systems permanently. At Oxfordshire we already have a booking system for free DIY waste which is working well.
16. Given the imminent temporary closure of Redbridge HWRC, but also the public profile of the service, the current financial pressures, it is essential the implementation of a booking system goes forward in readiness for then.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

17. Oxfordshire County Council Household Waste Recycling Centre Strategy 2023-2043, approved by Cabinet in September 2023.

The aim of the new HWRC strategy is to have a long-term plan for OCC's HWRC network, detailing where the HWRC's need to be sited in the context of long-term population increases and housing growth across Oxfordshire, changing waste legislation, and accounting for the current infrastructure condition, planning and ownership status of the existing HWRC Sites. The strategy details the ambition for improving OCC's recycling rates and enabling re-use facilities at HWRC Sites.

Financial Implications

18. The estimated cost of a booking system software is around £25k for the first year (including set up costs), with costs reducing for some suppliers for the annual subscription and maintenance of the system. The cost of additional "meet and greet" personnel to support the use of the system will depend upon negotiation with the site management contractors, although this is anticipated to cost around £300k per annum. It is well understood that "meet and greet" personnel are essential to the successful implementation of a Booking System

as they verify that Oxfordshire residents visiting the sites have made a booking before entry.

19. The Booking System, when fully implemented and supported by meet and greet will provide a tool to deliver committed MTFP savings through:
 - (a) supporting the related 'Unsorted Waste' project,
 - (b) reducing site usage by businesses/ traders,
 - (c) managing out of county site users
 - (d) generally allowing site staff to better oversee the usage of the sites.
 - (e) Other service changes may be introduced that are easier to implement with a Booking System in place.
20. The 'Unsorted Waste' project had previously been identified in the MTFP for 2024/25 as a means to save £200k pa. This saving has already been reported as being not achievable this year, partly because of the need for a Booking System to already be in place to deliver it successfully. With the anticipated savings from the initiative, it is considered the costs can be met within existing budgets inclusive of the committed £200k pa saving.
21. It is acknowledged that there is a risk on the anticipated savings materialising, but this is considered a relatively low risk as evidence from other local authorities indicates that booking systems do deliver significant savings and importantly are a mechanism to allow further savings from other service changes alluded to above. Officers will be monitoring the introduction of the change very closely and support success through robust contract management to ensure effective delivery on the ground.

Comments checked by: Filipp Skiffin, Assistant Finance Business Partner,
Filipp.Skiffins@Oxfordshire.gov.uk

Legal Implications

22. Pursuant to section 30 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (the Act) the council, being a county council, is a waste disposal authority for the purposes of Part II of the Act. Under section 51 of the Act (which falls under Part II) waste disposal authorities have a statutory duty to provide residents with a place to deposit their household waste and to dispose of the waste so deposited. HWRCs must be reasonable accessible and available at all reasonable times.
23. The service will continue to be provided, albeit with the requirement to book in advance, and therefore no legal implications arise.
24. The booking system will be procured in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules. Variations to the HWRC Contracts will be made in accordance with the change control procedures contained in the contracts and in accordance with procurement law as applicable.

Comments checked by: Jayne Pringle, Head of Law & LBP (Contracts & Conveyancing) Jayne.Pringle@Oxfordshire.gov.uk

Staff Implications

25. The project will be delivered through existing staffing resources.

Risk Management

26. The initial introduction of these changes may be contentious which could initiate a rise in complaints and in negative publicity with associated reputational issues for the Council to manage. The use of Meet and Greet at each site is seen as being vital to the effective implementation of a Booking System and is why it is being proposed here with the Booking System. In addition, a comprehensive communications campaign will be introduced ahead of the rollout of the Booking System.
27. As discussed in the Financial Implications section of this report there are significant risks around the current budget and financing of this service change. However, through effective implementation of the changes it anticipated that this is a relatively low risk.
28. DEFRA have previously consulted with local authorities on the use of booking systems and have indicated their concerns about the limitations this is perceived to place on residents wanting to use the sites. It is possible that DEFRA will revisit this.
29. Project Risks for the Booking System will be set up to track these areas.

Consultations

30. The Council did undertake a public engagement exercise in 2021 that covered a wider range of questions looking at HWRC waste acceptance and access procedures. This indicated that residents supported the 'unsorted waste'/ black bag splitting project, though there was less clear-cut support at the time for a related Booking System. It is now recognised that a Booking System is necessary for the 'unsorted waste' aspect and given the more recent evidence of the successful implementation of Booking Systems by other local authorities a new consultation is not proposed for this service change.

Paul Fermer
Director of Environment & Highways

Annex: See below
Contact Officer: Jeffrey Farrell,
Household Waste Recycling Centre Manager

October 2024

Annex

Equality & Inclusion Implications

1. The booking system has been assessed through an Equalities Impact Assessment, and it is not considered to directly bias or discriminate against individuals or groups. However, a consequence of having an online booking system could impact on a very small percentage of residents who do not have access to the internet. We will put in mitigation measures and work with the Customer Contact Centre to enable those residents to make a booking over the phone, mirroring the existing process which allows residents who do not have internet access to apply for van or trailer e-permits.

Sustainability Implications

2. This scheme will actively encourage residents to sort their recycling from their non-recyclables, helping Oxfordshire drive up recycling rates, which enables resources to be kept in circulation for longer and works towards our target to become carbon neutral by 2050.

A Climate Impact Assessment has been completed for the booking system, and it has been determined that it will have a net positive impact on sustainability of the Household Waste Recycling Centres service. This system will help residents plan and reduce the need for unnecessary trips, manage peak demand time for sites by limiting the number of visitors, therefore reducing queuing and idling times and help communicate key messages to residents on waste prevention and maximising recycling.

November 2024.

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