Taunton Deane Borough Council

Executive - 12 October 2011

Review of Floodlighting

Report of the Economic Development Lead
(This item is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Norman Cavill)

1. Executive Summary

1.1 The purpose of this report is to obtain authority from the Executive to carry out necessary safety and repair works to the Council's floodlighting installations in advance of inviting third party property owners – ie the owners of those properties in which many of the installations reside - to take over their control and management.

1.2 This report takes into account the recommendations of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee, which considered a report in February 2011. That report presented four options on how the Council might deal with the floodlighting installations.

2. Background

2.1 Floodlighting was originally installed by the Borough Council in order to illuminate some of the Borough's Churches, monuments and other architectural features. Many of the installations are situated in private property, illuminating third party structures. Many of the fittings were installed between 1986 and 1993.

2.2 The flood lighting was historically managed by the former electrical engineer (John Perkin) until his departure some six years ago. Various DLO officers have subsequently maintained them as part of the un-metered supply inventory. During this time no one has proactively managed the floodlighting assets specifically.

2.3 Since the Council ceased to carry out the repair and maintenance work in-house (through a contract with Deane DLO) some 18 years ago, various contractors have carried out the maintenance work (Connect SW, and SEC). Recently, SEC has been carrying out repairs on an 'as instructed' basis but with no contract.

2.4 Currently there are 43 sites with 114 fittings listed on the inventory, including churches, monuments and public buildings. Appendix 2 summarises the

properties that are lit, with those owned by TDBC highlighted. In addition to floodlights, some sites have TDBC owned / controlled area lighting within porches, lynch gates etc. It is acknowledged that the inventory may be out of date due to 'owners' of the unmetered supply inventory not being informed of changes to / removal of fittings.

2.5 At Officers' request during the Summer of 2011 the DLO's Building Supervisor [Electrical], Richard Eastman (MIET) arranged for the inspection of all the installations, and the carrying out of minor upgrade work to ensure their immediate safety. From those inspections, a schedule of works required to enhance the safety of / bring the installations up to a reasonable standard has been produced. A summary of this schedule can be made available to individual Members

2.6 Files referring back to the installation of the floodlights imply that no formal legal agreements were entered between the Council and the third party property owners. However, the items were installed on the unwritten understanding that, should it be in the Council's interest at the appropriate time, the assets would transfer to the third parties at no cost.

3. Current position and costs

3.1 The Council maintains a budget, which is held by Economic Development, for the repair and maintenance of the assets, as below. That budget has been used for electricity costs and by the DLO to instruct contractors to repair lights and fittings on an ad hoc, responsive basis.

2008/9	£5,000
2009/10	£9,500 (increase due to electricity inflation indexing)
2010/11	£9,500
2011/12	£9,750 (increase due to electricity inflation indexing)

3.2 In 2008/09 that annual budget was split between energy consumption costs and repairs as follows:

Energy Consumption (37657kWh / Year)	£4,428.71
Cost of repairs only:	£4,637.01
Total expenditure	**£9,065.72**

3.3 It is anticipated that the energy consumption costs will increase year on year, as will repairs to the light fittings as they continue to age and decay.

4. Suggested Options

4.1 The Corporate Scrutiny Committee considered this item at its meeting in February 2011. That report presented four options on how the Council might deal with the floodlighting installations, which are summarised in this section. Having carried out his inspections of the installations since February, some of

the financial figures mentioned differ from those that Corporate Scrutiny considered.

4.2 A summary of the financial implications of each option is presented in Appendix 1.

Option 1: Do nothing: Continue existing programme of ad hoc repairs

4.1.1 The inspections carried out over the summer have shown that although there is no immediate concern over the safety of the installations, deterioration is such that without a planned schedule of maintenance and repair, they may pose a potential Health and Safety risk to the public as time goes on. That, plus the ad hoc management arrangement, the environmental impact of the lights, and the anticipated increase in costs forces a fundamental review of the floodlighting policy, and imply that this is not a viable option.

4.2 Option 2. Disconnect electricity supply to all fittings, but leave fittings in situ.

4.2.1 Western Power Distribution has stated that in order for the sites to be removed from the UMS inventory, a physical disconnection must be made (ie. the Council cannot just remove the lights and leave the Western Power Distribution supply in place)

4.2.2 Western Power Distribution would disconnect all the supplies and leave fittings in place in a safe condition. If the site owners wish to reinstate, they could do so at their own expense, having ensured that the electrical system is brought up to a safe condition. Alternatively if the site owners do not wish to continue with lighting they could remove all fittings and un-metered supply points at their own expense.

4.2.3 Total average cost per unit to disconnect the electricity supply safely (based on average of TDBC labour and Western Power Distribution costs): £400

Number of sites: 43
Total estimated one-off cost: (43 @ £400 per site: £17,200

4.2.4 This is a worst case scenario, which would result in an annual budgetary saving during future years of £9,750 per annum plus inflation, but a one-off additional cost in 2011/12 of approximately £17,200.

4.3 Option 3. Offer lights to third party owners, and remove or refurbish the TDBC owned installations

4.3.1 Were the Council to transfer ownership and control of the lights and fittings to third party landowners, Western Power Distribution un-metered supplies unit has confirmed that it would be willing to set up agreements with individual churches and property owners, of which there are 36 of the 43 sites. This would involve each site entering into an ‘Un-metered connection agreement’, and then TDBC handing over sites.

4.3.2 This option would mean a proportion of the properties could remain floodlit.

4.3.3 The cost depends upon how many the Council would wish to maintain within its own property, but to guide Members decisions it is estimated that:

Refurbishment of those on third party properties: £15,445

Refurbishment of those remaining on TDBC property: £3,200, or disconnection of those remaining on TDBC property: (£400 x 6 sites) £2,400

4.3.4 This option would reduce the Council's ongoing costs, but would still require revenue funding (for electricity, repair and a rolling programme of 6 yearly inspections) for those within its ownership that remain (approximately £2,500 per annum).

4.3.5 In this option the third party owners would be invited to consider taking on the management and funding of the floodlighting, and given a reasonable period of time to respond to the Council before action is taken at the end of the current financial year. Should the third party owners not wish to take on the installation, it will be safely removed as per Option 2.

4.4 Option 4. Upgrade all electrical equipment and fittings and continue to light all premises.

Based on his inspection programme during the Summer of 2011 Richard Eastman estimates that a one off expenditure of £18,645 would be required to ensure the safety of all current installations.

4.4.1 The work to upgrade the electrical systems and replace damaged fittings in all 43 sites would therefore involve a one-off cost of around £18,645 (maximum) plus ongoing costs at the current level of a minimum of £9,750 per year, plus an annual sum of £500 to pay for a rolling programme of 6 yearly inspections.

5. Corporate Scrutiny Recommendation

5.1 Although Corporate Scrutiny's consideration of the above options were based on slightly different estimates of the costs of repairs, the same principles still stand. Members of that committee recognised that 'doing nothing' is not an option. Furthermore they requested that, should Option 3 be adopted, the third parties be given adequate notice to consider taking on the installations. Members also raised concerns over the impact of the lighting on the environment, referring specifically to the Dark Skies Initiative, which lobbies against light pollution of the night skies. At the end of the discussion the Committee resolved that the Executive Member be recommended to offer floodlights to third party owners, incorporating a notice period and that all Council owned installations be removed.

5.2 Corporate Scrutiny's resolution is as per Option 3 in Paragraph 4.3 above.

6. Finance Comments

6.1 Appendix 1 presents a summary of the estimated cost of each of the four options.

6.2 Officers would recommend that where costs over and above the existing budget (£9,750) are required, that funding should be taken from the Council's General Reserves.

7. Legal Comments

7.2 There are legal implications if the installations are not brought up to regulatory standards. Documentary evidence does not apparently exist to ascertain whether or not any agreement was entered into with third party land owners. New legal agreements will be required should members wish to go ahead to transfer ownership of lighting and fixtures to third parties.

8. Links to Corporate Aims

8.1 The lights were originally installed with the intention of enhancing the attractiveness of the Borough's built assets to visitors and tourists. Removal of the lights will have a correspondingly negative impact on this, which links into Aim 2: Regeneration.

8.2 Removing the lights and reducing the energy consumption would reduce Carbon Emissions in the Borough and light pollution in rural areas, both of which would contribute to delivering Aim 4: Climate Change.

9. Environmental and Community Safety Implications

9.1 There are significant likely environmental and community safety implications, particularly in relation to the physical safety of the decaying light fittings, if action is not taken.

9.2 Removing the lights and reducing the energy consumption would reduce Carbon Emissions in the Borough and light pollution in rural areas

10. Risk Management

10.1 The IEE (Institution of Electrical Engineers) BS7671:2008 recommends electrical testing and inspection of Highway electrical supplies (The nearest comparable installation) at a frequency of every 6 years.

10.2 The ILE (Institution of Lighting Engineers) recommends any supports (Columns) are inspected for structural integrity at a maximum of 3 yearly intervals. To the best of officers' knowledge, no testing has been carried out by the DLO, or either of the subsequent contractors (SEC confirmed no testing by themselves within the last 10+ Years).

10.3 Should the Council decide to retain responsibility for all or some of the floodlights it is important that provision is made for periodic inspection and proactive management by the maintenance contractor.

11 Equalities Impact

11.1 The are no immediate equalities impacts arising from this report

12. Recommendations

12.1 That the Executive selects Option 3, offering those floodlighting installations on third party land to the owner of that land before the end of the current financial year, and that the Lead Executive Member be given authority to ascertain which of those that remain on TDBC property should remain in operation.

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Appendix 1

Summary of estimated costs associated with each option

		Option 1 Do nothing*	**Option 2 Disconnect all**	**Option 3 Transfer to 3rd party & retain TDBC**	**Option 4 Retain all & electrical repair**
		£ estimate	£ estimate	£ estimate	£ estimate
One-off repair		0	0	£18,645	£18,645
One off disconnect		0	£17,200	£0	0
Total one off cost in 2011/12		**0**	**£17,200**	**£18,645**	**£18,645**
Annual revenue costs	Maintenance	£4,750	0	£1,200	£4,750
	Electricity	£4,750	0	£1,200	£4,750
	6 yearly inspections	No current budget	0	£100	£500
Total annual revenue cost		**£9,500**	**0**	**£2,500**	**£10,000**

* Members will appreciate that Option 1 may result in legal action being taken against the Council (and potentially major costs) should an accident occur as a result of the inadequately maintained installations

Appendix 2

FLOODLIGHTING - SITES IN TAUNTON DEANE

TOWN/VILLAGE		LOCATION
BISHOPS HULL		CHURCH
BISHOPS LYDEARD		CHURCH
BRADFORD ON TONE		CHURCH
BURROWBRIDGE		CHURCH
		MUMP
CORFE		CHURCH
DURSTON		CHURCH
HILLFARRENCE		CHURCH
KINGSTON ST. MARY		CHURCH
LANGFORD BUDVILLE		CHURCH
MILVERTON		CHURCH
NORTH CURRY		CHURCH
NORTON FITZWARREN		CHURCH
OAKE		CHURCH
ROCKWELL GREEN		CHURCH
RUISHTON		CHURCH
SAMPFORD ARUNDEL		CHURCH
STAPLE FITZPAINE		CHURCH
STAPLEGROVE		CHURCH
STOKE ST. GREGORY		CHURCH
STOKE ST. MARY		CHURCH
TAUNTON		ALL SAINTS
	TDBC	**BURMA**
	TDBC	**CASTLE BOW**
		HALCON BAPTISTS
	TDBC	**HANKRIDGE "TAUNTON" SIGN**
		HOLY TRINITY
	TDBC	**OLD LIBRARY GARDENS**
	TDBC	**MARKET HOUSE**
		NORTH ST.
	TDBC	**OMB**
		ST. ANDREWS
		ST. GEORGES
		ST. JAMES
		ST. JOHNS
		ST. MARYS
		ST. PETERS, LYNGFORD
		WILTON CHURCH
TRULL		CHURCH
WELLINGTON		CHURCH
WEST BUCKLAND		CHURCH
WIVELISCOMBE		CHURCH

Highlighted rows are in TDBC ownership