



DRAFT PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION NOTICE

PROPOSED INDIVIDUAL DECISION BY THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH AND WELLBEING

TOPIC – HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S HIGHWAYS MAINTENANCE CONSULTATION

PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

The Access to Information Procedure Rules – Part 4, Section 22 of the Council's Constitution provides for a decision to be made by an individual member of Cabinet.

In accordance with the Procedure Rules, the Chief Operating Officer, the Chief Executive and the Chief Finance Officer are consulted together with Chairman and Vice Chairman of The Overview and Scrutiny Committee and any other relevant overview and scrutiny committee. In addition, all Members are notified.

If five or more Members from those informed so request, the Leader may require the matter to be referred to Cabinet for determination.

If you wish to make representation on this proposed Decision please contact the relevant Portfolio Holder and the following Democratic Services Officer by 5.00pm on Monday 11 December 2015.

Contact Officers:

Case Officer: Neville Crisp, Tel: 01962 848484, Email: ncrisp@winchester.gov.uk

Democratic Services Officer: Nancy Graham, Tel: 01962 848235, Email: ngraham@winchester.gov.uk

SUMMARY

Hampshire County Council are undertaking a consultation to seek views on proposed initiatives designed to help the County Council provide a more efficient service in response to continuing pressure on its funding and to consequently provide services in a more targeted and cost-effective manner.

This Portfolio Holders decision paper is in response to the County Council's consultation on proposed changes to the way its highways maintenance services might be delivered in the future.

Full details of the proposed changes being consulted on are included in the consultation documents. See Appendix 1.

The on-line consultation can be also found here:

<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/highwaysconsultation>

The consultation has three elements:

1. Dimming street lights;
2. Reducing grass cutting; and
3. Reducing weed killing.

The potential impact of the proposed changes on road safety and traffic management as well as the possible implications for community safety and the wider environment has been considered during the preparation of the suggested response as set out below.

Due to the diverse character of the Winchester District which includes larger settlement like Winchester and the market towns as well as smaller settlements and open countryside it is not possible to send a response that will be appropriate for the whole area and therefore the response is being sent in relation to the urban area of Winchester town covered by the 'Saint' wards.

The consultation document was discussed at the Winchester Community Safety Partnership Group meeting on 1st December 2015 and the members of the group raised the following concerns regarding the proposed dimming of street lights:-

- Dimming levels need to be based on site specific risk assessments
- Accident sites and data needs to be taken into account, especially those for vulnerable road users and pedestrians
- Crime hot-spots need to be taken into consideration
- Areas with night time economy (pubs, restaurants) need consideration
- Areas with high student density need special consideration
- Dimming needs to take account of seasonal changes in natural light
- Dimming should be different for weekends especially in town centres
- Concern that perceived fear of crime will increase
- Need for more detail – what is the definition of a less busy rural area
- Major concern over potential impact on other key services if savings are not made through this initiative
- Major concern that emergency services are apparently unaware of the consultation

There was also concern raised that reduced weed killing could lead to uncontrolled growth damaging footways resulting in potential trip hazards. Excessive growth could also cause difficulties for visually impaired pedestrians.

The above issues need to be raised with HCC as part of the response to the consultation.

It should be noted that all of the Parish Councils in the District were contacted directly by HCC and informed of the consultation and it is expected that they will be responding accordingly with comments representing their local needs and concerns which in many cases will cover more rural locations.

All City Council Members have also been made aware of the consultation and may decide to respond directly.

The consultation period ends 11th December 2015 and the City Council's formal response needs to be sent before this date.

PROPOSED DECISION

That the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Health and Wellbeing formally responds to the consultation on behalf of the City Council as detailed in the questionnaire attached Appendix 1 which asks respondents to rank 6 options for changing the way lights are operated in the County along with an opportunity to make any additional comments.

REASON FOR THE PROPOSED DECISION AND OTHER ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

The consultation is primarily aimed at establishing ways for the County Council to reduce expenditure whilst continuing to provide acceptable levels of service as expected by its residents. In reducing costs for some highway maintenance functions the County is no doubt aiming to safe guard the provision of other services, which will be of overall benefit to the residents of the Winchester district.

The aims of the County Council can be supported by the City Council provided they do not have any detrimental effect on road safety and traffic management or community safety and the environment as a whole. Taking these considerations into account the options of reducing the level of lighting from midnight to 5am by 65% and between 45% and 55% at other times seems a reasonable approach and are therefore the most favoured options in the questionnaire. Turning lights off between midnight and 5am or altering the times when lights are switched on and off are not recommended and are therefore identified in the questionnaire as the two least favoured options.

Furthermore it recommended that in locations which have a significant accident history or are used by large numbers of vulnerable road users no dimming of lights should occur.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

HCC currently contribute £82K towards the cost of highway grass cutting operations which are carried out within the agency arrangements. The City Council tops up this funding by £19K in order to increase the number of cuts from 6 to 9 cuts for aesthetic reasons.

If the HCC funding is further reduced then the City Council will have to decide whether it wishes to increase the top up funding in order to maintain the current cutting frequency. Each cut costs approximately £7K.

There is also the issue of contractual obligations with the Landscape Group which would require a contract variation to change the cutting frequencies currently within the specification.

CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN ON THE PROPOSED DECISION

None – this is a response to a consultation being undertaken by Hampshire County Council.

FURTHER ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED FOLLOWING PUBLICATION OF THE DRAFT PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION NOTICE

N/A

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY THE DECISION MAKER OR A MEMBER OR OFFICER CONSULTED

None.

DISPENSATION GRANTED BY THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

N/A

Approved by: (signature)

Date of Decision

Councillor Frank Pearson – Portfolio Holder for Environment, Health and Wellbeing

Your County Council, your say | Economy, Transport and Environment

Shaping Hampshire

Highways Maintenance Consultation



Consultation period: From midday on Monday 2 November 2015 to Friday 11 December 2015.

This consultation is being undertaken to seek people's views on proposed initiatives designed to help Hampshire County Council provide a more efficient service by April 2017, responding to continuing pressure on its funding.

The County Council is asking for residents' views on proposed changes to the way its highways maintenance services are delivered in the future. The feedback from this consultation will be used to inform decisions around how the County Council could provide its services in a more targeted and cost-effective manner.

Highways maintenance services are delivered through the County Council's Economy, Transport and Environment (ETE) Department which is responsible for:

- highways and transport;
- waste management;
- minerals and waste planning;
- economic development and regeneration; and
- general environment services within the County Council.

ETE has an anticipated savings target of £14.7 million, to achieve by April 2017.

The County Council's duty as the Highway Authority

As the Highway Authority, the County Council has a duty to manage the road network to ensure, as far as possible, the safe and convenient movement of traffic and all road users. Hampshire County Council maintains 5,280 miles of road in Hampshire. It is responsible for all roads and highways in Hampshire except for:

- motorways and trunk roads which are the responsibility of Highways England;
- roads in Southampton which are the responsibility of Southampton City Council;
- roads in Portsmouth which are the responsibility of Portsmouth City Council; and
- a small minority of privately-maintained highways.

The County Council has a duty to keep the highways safe, and undertakes a wide range of activities to deliver this, including: carriageway and footway surfacing, winter maintenance, drainage work to tackle flooding, street lighting, traffic management, signage, speed limits, crossings, trees, hedges and verges, traffic lights and emergencies.

Some elements of highways maintenance are delivered with partners such as district and borough authorities, as well as the Police on road safety.

Background and context

Shaping Hampshire - Spending Review Consultation

Earlier this year, the County Council undertook a countywide consultation with residents to seek views on the three main options for managing the anticipated £98 million shortfall in funding by April 2017, namely:

- Raising the rate of Council Tax
- Using the County Council's reserves differently
- Reducing spending on specific services.

This consultation was called '*Shaping Hampshire – Spending Review Consultation*'. Residents told us which services they consider to be 'most important' for the County Council to continue to deliver and they gave their views on savings options.

Services for children, older people and vulnerable people were ranked as being the 'most important' services for the County Council to support and deliver. Household waste recycling, road maintenance and libraries were also ranked as important services. However, these rankings were not based on people's use of the service.

Overall, there was also a high level of support for:

- The County Council's current financial strategy
 - Running the County Council more efficiently by reducing the cost of back office functions
 - Using savings to help to protect frontline service, and
 - Prudently using some reserves to support the cost of change.
- Savings being found through a combination of increasing Council Tax (32% of respondents were willing to see a Council Tax increase of 1.99%), using more of the County Council's reserves and reducing spending on some services.

Until an announcement is made by central Government in its Autumn Statement about future public sector funding, the County Council has based its current financial planning on the assumption of no increase in Council Tax.

There was less support for using reserves differently, or for finding the anticipated savings through reductions in funding for services alone.

Full details of the consultation findings can be found on the County Council's website www.hants.gov.uk/spendingreviewsurvey.

Preferred ways to save money within Economy, Transport and Environment

In relation to the options on which the County Council consulted for savings in service areas for Economy, Transport and Environment (ETE), the majority of residents and stakeholders opposed reducing spending on Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs). Instead, respondents preferred the County Council to make savings through the following initiatives:

- Dimming streetlights
- Reviewing the amount of waste produced by households and increasing the proportion that can be recycled
- Reviewing local traffic management schemes which are not led by safety concerns or legal requirements

Consequently, ETE is pursuing proposals around some of these options through this survey and via separate consultations over the next year.

What is included in this consultation?

The County Council is now asking for your views on proposed changes to the way some environmental work on Hampshire's highways is carried out. These include:

Street light dimming:

- further dimming of lights in urban and rural areas;
- longer hours for street light dimming; and
- turning off street lights between certain hours.

Grass cutting:

- reducing the number of times per year that the grass is cut along the highway in rural areas;
- stopping grass cutting in rural areas;
- reducing the number of times per year the grass is cut in urban areas; and
- stopping grass cutting in urban areas.

Weed killing:

- reducing the number of treatments on weeds along the highways per year; or
- stopping all weed killing along the highway.

How to have your say

This questionnaire is divided into three sections:

Section 1 – dimming street lights

Section 2 – reducing grass cutting

Section 3 – reducing weed killing

Responding to the consultation is entirely voluntary. If you would like to respond, further useful information can be found on the dedicated County Council webpage:

<http://consultations.hants.gov.uk>

You can also complete the questionnaire online at the above address – this will help to keep costs down. The questionnaire takes approximately five minutes to complete.

Hampshire County Council adheres to the requirements of the UK Data Protection Act 1998. Hampshire County Council is registered on the public register of data controllers which is looked after by the Information Commissioner. Under the Data Protection Act the information which you have provided in this questionnaire will be used only for the purposes of this survey. All responses will be kept confidential.

The consultation results, and analysis of the findings, will be published and presented to the Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment on 19 January 2016.

Alternative formats

To request this information and the questionnaire in another format such as large print, audio or Braille, please email: info@hants.gov.uk, or call: **0300 555 1388**.

If you have any queries about this consultation, please email Hampshire County Council at: info@hants.gov.uk or call: **0300 555 1388**.

The County Council's Consultation Policy

The County Council is committed to five principles for consultation:

- To consult on key issues and proposals
- To consult in good time
- To be inclusive but within clear and appropriate limits
- To consult using clear, simple information, and
- To ensure responses are taken into account when decisions are made.

Section 1: Further dimming of street lighting

In Hampshire, there are over 154,000 street lights, illuminated signs and traffic bollards. Over the past five years, all street lights have been replaced with more energy efficient lighting, to improve visibility and reduce light pollution. The new street lights in Hampshire can be controlled remotely.

Upgrading the street lighting together with dimming street lights has saved 11.63m Kwh of energy and over £1m. Where there is a specific and demonstrable need for full lighting, the County Council ensures this is met, for example outside major public service buildings.

Currently, the majority of lighting across Hampshire is controlled by this system which dims streetlights in residential areas by 60% from full power between midnight and 5am, and by 35% at all other times.

There are options which could be pursued for altering the level of street lighting across Hampshire which could further save energy costs, while also saving up to 400 metric tonnes of carbon. These options are set out below across three different levels of savings.

Please rank each of the options according to your preference: ranking the option you would most like to see the County Council to implement, with 1 being most preferred and 6 being the least preferred:

Low level savings option - projected to save £50,000 each year

- | | |
|---|--|
| 5 | Alter the switch-on / switch-off times of streetlights so they come on later, and switch off earlier. Actual times will vary over the year and in response to the prevailing weather |
|---|--|

Medium level savings options - projected to save between £50,000 and £200,000 each year

- | | |
|---|---|
| 2 | Dim all streetlights to achieve an overall 10% reduction in power against current levels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 65% of full power between midnight and 5am, and • By 45% of full power at all other times |
|---|---|

- | | |
|---|--|
| 4 | 10% reduction as above, but with a greater dimming in less busy rural areas and villages, compared to urban town centres |
|---|--|

High level savings options - projected to save over £200,000 each year

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | Dim all streetlights to achieve up to a 20% reduction in power against current levels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 65% of full power between midnight and 5am, and • By 55% of full power at all other times |
|---|--|

- | | |
|---|--|
| 3 | Up to a 20% reduction as above, but with a greater dimming in less busy rural areas and villages, compared to urban town centres |
|---|--|

- | | |
|---|--|
| 6 | Turn off all street lights between midnight and 5am, representing a change from current policy |
|---|--|

Are there any areas where you think street lights should not be dimmed?

See attached comments sheet

Section 2: Grass cutting

The County Council currently provides services which are better than the 'National Code of Practice standards for Well-Maintained Highways'. Hampshire currently provides the following:

- In areas where the speed limit is 40mph or above (largely rural areas), grass is cut on Hampshire's highway verges twice a year to a width of one metre. There is no statutory minimum requirement for this work to be completed. Grass may be cut more frequently where higher visibility is required, for safety purposes.
- Where the speed limit is less than 40 mph (largely urban areas), the grass is cut at least five times a year. This frequency is enhanced by contributions from partner District and Borough Council authorities where they deem it necessary.

In order to achieve savings in this area, it is proposed to reduce the frequency of highway grass cutting, where it is safe to do so. Options are set out below across three different levels of savings.

Please rank each of the options according to your preference: ranking the option you would most like to see the County Council to implement, with 1 being most preferred and 5 being the least preferred:

Medium level savings options – projected to achieve £50,000 to 200,000 per year

3	To reduce grass cutting to one cut per year, in rural areas (roads where the speed limit is more than 40mph)
1	To reduce the frequency of grass cutting by one cut per year in urban areas (roads where the speed limit is less than 40mph)

High level savings options – projected to achieve over £200,000 per year

4	To cease grass cutting in rural areas (roads where the speed limit is 40mph or above) with the exception of those areas where it is unsafe to do so
2	To further reduce the frequency of grass cutting by two cuts per year in urban areas (roads where the speed limit is less than 40 miles per hour)
5	To cease grass cutting in urban areas (roads where the speed limit is less than 40 miles per hour)

Are there any areas where you think grass cutting should not be reduced?

See attached comments sheet

Section 3: Weed killing

Weed killing takes place twice a year on the Hampshire highways and footways, with use of herbicides. This is carried out to maintain the look and feel of the local community, but carries no statutory safety requirement.

To achieve savings in this area, it is proposed to alter the frequency of weed killing across Hampshire. Regardless of the chosen approach, weed killing will continue to be undertaken where there is a specific and demonstrable need. The options are set out below across two different levels of savings.

Please tick your preferred option

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Medium level savings option - projected to save £50,000 to £200,000 per year: <ul style="list-style-type: none">To halve the frequency of weed killing from twice a year, to one treatment per year
<input type="checkbox"/>	High level savings option – projected to save over £200,000 per year: <ul style="list-style-type: none">To cease all weed killing activity across Hampshire.

Are there any areas where you think weed killing should not be reduced?

See attached comments sheet.

About you

Hampshire County Council adheres to the requirements of the UK Data Protection Act 1998. Hampshire County Council is registered on the public register of data controllers which is looked after by the Information Commissioner. Under the Data Protection Act the information which you have provided in this questionnaire will be used only for the purposes of this survey. All responses will be kept confidential

To help us to analyse the views of residents across Hampshire, it would be useful if you could enter your **post code** below. We will not use this information for any other purpose:

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Are you responding to this consultation as an individual or on behalf of an organisation?
(please tick one box)

As an individual

On behalf of an organisation

If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please tell us which organisation you are responding for:

Winchester City Council

Thank you for taking part in this consultation. Please return your completed response form to the following address by no later than Friday 11 December 2015.

Research and Intelligence Team
Economy, Transport and Environment
Hampshire County Council
Elizabeth II Court
Winchester
SO23 8UJ

A summary of the responses to this consultation and the analysis will be made available to the public on the Hampshire County Council's website before any decisions are made by the Executive Lead Member for Economy, Transport and Environment on 19 January 2016

Details will be available on our website: www.hants.gov.uk/councilmeetings

HCC Highways Maintenance Consultation

Comments sheet

Winchester City Council

Section1 - Further dimming of street lighting

Dimming levels need to be based on site specific risk assessments.
Accident sites and data needs to be taken into account, especially those for vulnerable road users and pedestrians.
Crime hot-spots need to be taken into consideration.
Areas with night time economy (pubs, restaurants) need consideration.
Areas with high student density need special consideration.
Dimming needs to take account of seasonal changes in natural light.
Dimming should be different for weekends especially in town centres.
Concern that perceived fear of crime will increase.
Need for more detail – what is the definition of a less busy rural area.
Major concern over potential impact on other key services if savings are not made through this initiative.
Major concern that emergency services are apparently unaware of the consultation.

Section2 - Grass cutting

The City Council already tops up the existing grass cutting regime by £19K per annum in order to meet customer expectations for such work. Any reduction in HCC funding will either mean potential additional costs to the City Council to maintain the existing arrangements or a reduction in service standards and subsequent complaints about the quality of service. If the additional costs to the City Council become too excessive then it may have to review participation in the agency arrangements.
The proposed changes will have an impact on the City Council's contractual arrangements with The Landscape Group Ltd who carry out this work within the overall grounds maintenance contract. A reduction in the amount of work may result in a claim for loss of profit against the City Council.

Section 3 - Weed killing

Reduction in weed killing may lead to increase in damage to footways and encroaching vegetation which could cause problems for visually impaired and mobility impaired pedestrians.
Weed killing should not be reduced where it might encourage pests and the build-up of litter or near schools and playgrounds.