

## Frequently asked questions – Street Lighting Dimming Pilot

### What is the council considering in relation to street lighting?

On 19 December 2023, the Cabinet consider a proposal to dim all streetlights including those on traffic routes, conflict areas and key junctions between 8pm and 10pm, as part of an eighteen-month trial period. The Cabinet noted the outcome of the public consultation, approved the proposal to trial the scheme and gave delegated authority to the Director of Environment and Transport to make any required alterations following feedback from the Leicestershire Police and other emergency services.

### When will these changes come into effect?

Implementation will commence in January 2024. It will take approximately four weeks for around 68,500 lights to be re-programmed across Leicestershire.

The pilot will be carefully monitored on a regular basis to understand if there are any unintended consequences in relation to crime, the fear of crime, or serious accidents.

There will be a report back to the Highways and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee after a 12-month period. A further report will be brought back to Cabinet at the end of the 18-month trial period to consider comments and feedback received and to agree the permanent lighting provision in view of the outcome of the trial.

### Why is change necessary?

The two reasons for change are environmental and financial. The council is committed to becoming a 'net zero' authority by 2030. Net zero refers to the point when greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere are balanced with their removal, so that there is no overall addition to atmospheric levels. There will also be benefits of reduced carbon emissions and light pollution, less energy consumption and reduced energy costs for the council. The authority also needs to make significant savings over the next four years.

### Isn't the council required to provide street lighting?

The council does not have a statutory requirement to provide street lighting, it has powers to install street lighting if it wants to but is not legally required to do this.

However, when it chooses to provide lighting for the highway, it must maintain it in a safe condition. The council has no obligation to provide lighting to private frontages beyond the highway.

The council also has a duty to consider the effects of its decisions on crime and disorder.

## What benefits would the change bring?

The council was originally expecting to save £500k per year and 315 tonnes in CO<sub>2</sub>e as a result of dimming the lights between 8pm and 10 pm. However, risk assessment work has identified some exemptions. These are situations where the lights will remain at their current lighting intensity and regime between 8pm and 10 pm for safety reasons, examples include at zebra crossings, vertical traffic calming features etc.

Because the lights will remain at current levels for these exemptions, we now anticipate financial savings to be reduced to £380k per year, with energy savings reduced to 261.8 tonnes in CO<sub>2</sub>e.

## How has risk been considered in developing the change proposal?

The council invited people taking part in the consultation to highlight any areas of concern on a map using Social Pinpoint. 61 areas were identified along with a further 99 locations. This included specific roads, junctions, or in some instances specific towns or villages. These points enabled a full risk assessment to be carried out by officers, who confirmed that there should be six key exemptions as described below:

Exemptions – (Lighting levels will remain at 50%)

- a) Vertical traffic calming features such as speed bumps
- b) Zebra crossings
- c) Town centres- extent to be determined by the council
- d) Where there are evidenced increases in night-time vehicular accidents between 8pm and 10pm. This means accidents which are of greater severity at conflict areas such as roundabouts or key junctions.
- e) Where there is evidence of increased night-time crime and anti-social behaviour between 8pm and 10 pm.
- f) Steps that are currently illuminated.

The council has contacted Leicestershire Police, East Midlands Ambulance Service and Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service as part of the consultation, and they have raised no objections to the proposed changes. However, officers in the council will continue to work closely with these key stakeholders to monitor any impacts arising from change.

If a very high-risk situation occurs, the Police could ask the council to re-instate the lighting back to previous levels. This could be done for a period of three months to aid police investigation. Should other issues arise, or key metrics increase during the trial, the council has the means to re-instate the lighting levels to previous level utilising its Central Management System that is used to control streetlights in the County, while ongoing monitoring is undertaken.

## What if other risks became known during the trial period?

The council will monitor other hazards to see if any of the following issues are increasing between 8pm and 10pm at night:

- a) Increased interactions between pedestrians and street furniture
- b) Increased conflict between vehicles (not just at key roundabouts or junctions)
- c) Increased conflict between vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists, (not just at key roundabouts or junctions).

If there is sufficient evidence of harm, actions could include the application of visible strips to streetlights or signs or the temporary or permanent decision to revert lighting to the previous level.

## I am worried about crime, what action should I take?

One key thing to be aware of is that lighting will still be provided albeit at a reduced level, and crime rates may not be affected by this change. We will continue to work closely with the Police who will make us aware of any concerns they have.

If you have a specific concern about crime that is related to street lighting provision, **please use the [Report IT form on our website](#)**. If you have general concerns about crime, you can find out how to report this to the Police on their website at [leics.police.uk](https://leics.police.uk)

The website also gives advice on how you can try to protect yourself from common crime situations, as well as steps you can take to help other people feel safe in public places.

## I feel uneasy about the risk of accidents on dark evenings what can be done about this?

The first thing to bear in mind is that lighting will still be provided albeit at a reduced level, and accident rates may not be affected by this change. We will continue to work closely with the Emergency Services who will make us aware of any concerns that they have.

During the winter, the council will be running a safety campaign to remind people how to stay safe and visible on darker nights. People using the highways need to continue to take individual due care and attention when using highways and pavements.

If you have a specific concern about accidents related to street lighting provision, please contact the council. You can use our **Report IT form found at [leicestershire.gov.uk/street-lighting](https://leicestershire.gov.uk/street-lighting)** to tell us more about the specific location and details.

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