

Festive lights – review of provision and funding

SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Council currently provides a range of festive lights across the city throughout the year, to mark a number of occasions.
- 1.2 The cost of providing the lighting for these occasions is budgeted for each year at £114,000. In the 2014/15 to 2016/17 budget setting process consideration was given to stopping the provision of festive lights.
- 1.3 The current budget proposals have delayed the budget saving for the festive lights until 2016/17. However it is still proposed that the Council seek to work with partners across the city to collectively look at how we can reduce the overall costs associated with festive lighting, as well as looking at how we might be able to encourage external contributions from across the city in an effort to reduce the dependence on the Councils budget for this discretionary service.
- 1.4 This report provides an update on the current situation.

RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To note the content of the report and the proposed actions over the coming year.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 To provide Members with information on the provision of festive lights and the proposal to work more closely with partners to reduce costs and to seek external contributions towards to the cost of such lighting.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 4.1 Across the city the Council provides festive lighting for a range of occasions throughout the year; Vaisakhi, Eid, Diwali and Christmas.

- 4.2 The lighting for Vaisakhi, Eid and Diwali is predominantly within the Normanton area, through the district centre. These lights are left in position all year round, and illuminated at the appropriate times of the year. Maintenance and repairs to lights are carried out in preparation for the illumination of the lights.
- 4.3 The Christmas lights are displayed in the city centre area and Normanton. As well as lighting the Councils own buildings, we also put lights in the market place, the main thoroughfares and shopping streets. The Council also work in partnership with the two Business Improvement Districts in the city centre, which have paid for replacement lighting and additional lighting within their specific areas to enhance the displays.
- 4.4 The Council's annual budget for festive lighting, of £114,000 per year, includes the costs associated with the installations for the events, and the repair, maintenance and replacement of lights as required.
- 4.5 In the 2014/15 to 2016/17 budget review process the funding for the festive lights was proposed to be removed in 2015/16, with a view that the Council work to identify third party funding/ sponsorship to enable the budget reduction to be achieved, but the festive lights still be delivered across the city. This reduction is not now proposed, but the commitment to work with partners and to reduce the Councils funding in this area of discretionary spend is still a key area of work.
- 4.6 To date there have only been very initial discussions with the project managers of the BID companies, with a meeting having taken place in December to begin to consider in more detail the options that may be available to the city for the funding of festive lights.
- 4.7 A detailed analysis of the costs is currently being undertaken. This will include establishing the costs associated with each of the lighting events; the amount for repairs and replacements; the cost of lighting displays that are on each of the Council owned buildings and the cost of lighting displays in areas of public realm. Information will also be gathered from the BID companies and any other organisations that are involved in displaying festive lights, so that a comprehensive understanding can be gathered from which further actions can be identified.
- 4.8 Once the baseline has been established further discussions with partners in the city centre and Normanton will be held in order to consider options and the way forward.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 To continue for the Council to pay for lighting at the current budget levels; this is not considered viable in the long term considering the other priorities that the Council has to fund.

This report has been approved by the following officers:

Legal officer Financial officer Human Resources officer Estates/Property officer Service Director(s) Other(s)	Mazer Hussain Christine Durrant
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IMPLICATIONS

Financial and Value for Money

- 1.1 The current annual Council budget for festive lights is £114,000. The current Medium Term Financial Plan delays the previously agreed saving until 2016/17

Legal

- 2.1 None arising from this report.

Personnel

- 3.1 None arising from this report.

IT

- 4.1 None arising from this report.

Equalities Impact

- 5.1 None arising from this report.

Health and Safety

- 6.1 None arising from this report.

Environmental Sustainability

- 7.1 None arising from this report.

Property and Asset Management

- 8.1 None arising from this report.

Risk Management

- 9.1 None arising from this report.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 10.1 The provision of festive lights contributes to;
- Providing a vibrant programme of events, performances and festivals making Derby a great place to live, visit and relocate.
 - Working with our partners to attract more visitors to Derby and increase how much

money people spend in the city through targeted research and marketing.