

Title of meeting: Culture and City Development Decision Meeting

Date of meeting: 4 October 2019

Subject: Seafront Decorative Festoon Lighting

Report by: Director of Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services

Wards affected: All

Key decision: No

Full Council decision: No

1. Purpose of report

1.1 To seek authorisation from the Cabinet Member for Culture and City Development to explore and undertake a pilot scheme for a replacement system of the current decorative festoon lighting across the seafront.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That officers are authorised to explore and undertake a pilot lighting scheme in specific areas of the seafront with a longer term view to implementing a more cost effective lighting scheme across areas of the seafront once the pilot has been carried out an a full evaluation provided subject to available funding.

3. Background

3.1 The decorative seafront lighting is currently a festoon system with catenary wires running between lamp posts or standalone post across areas of the seafront. The lighting runs from the east of South Parade Pier to Hovertravel and is also installed all around Canoe Lake and Burgoyne Gardens. Additionally there is a different configuration installed down Avenue de Caen.

3.2 As Members will appreciate this lighting is exposed to very harsh environmental conditions with both high levels of wind a sea spray all through the year. The fragility of the catenary wiring system is increasingly vulnerable with an increase in catenary breakages and disconnections of the lighting line with the wiring. We also experience a significant problem with salt water spray getting into the timer switches which also causes erratic lighting with strands between posts not working.

3.3 The public rightly expect this decorative lighting to be of a high standard and currently we are finding this extremely hard to maintain due to both the age and set up of the system as well as its exposure to the harsh conditions. The bulbs

themselves are of an old fashioned design and the current system cannot operate with more efficient LED lights which believe would both ensure more resilience to the environmental conditions but also reduce the running costs of the system.

- 3.4 The details in the recently released coastal defence system planning consultation have demonstrated that new decorative lighting is not covered within this scheme. Our understanding is that the existing festoon lighting would just be reinstated on the posts once the works have been completed.
- 3.5 The enhancements around the D Day story and other public realm improvements have been extremely well received and the continuation of these improvements now to consider the lighting would also support the original aspirations as outlined in the Seafront Strategy.
- 3.6 We would seek to understand the potential energy savings the pilot scheme could provide us with as well as ensuring that any trials were appropriate for both the Civil Aviation Authority and Queens Harbour Master in regards to not interfering with navigational lights.
- 3.7 We have already seen how improved and enhanced lighting has added interest and enjoyment of features such as around the development of the Hotwalls Studios and also the water feature outside of Southsea Castle. We would seek to ensure that any lighting system also enhanced the seafront offer further as well as being easier to maintain and more energy efficient.
- 3.8 We appreciate that the current festoon lighting is much loved by residents and visitors and it is understood that any trials would require a full evaluation and further financial consideration prior to a fuller proposal being considered.

4. Reasons for recommendations

- 4.1 The existing festoon lighting system is becoming increasingly costly to maintain and is not capable of using energy efficient lighting systems due to its age. The exploration of new and different systems through a pilot scheme will enable us to effectively explore and measure alternative options before submission of a larger scale
- 4.2 We would like to trial some alternative options along Avenue de Caen to ensure that they can withstand the environmental conditions which we know are especially problematic for lighting systems.
- 4.3 If we do not provide an alternative system we believe the existing festoon lighting will increasingly fail and become financially unsustainable so there would be an increasing likelihood of the seafront not having a decorative lighting system.

5. Equality impact assessment

5.1 An initial Equalities Impact Assessment is attached.

6. Legal implications

6.1 In relation to street lighting generally, the legislative position is as follows:-

- The Highways Act empowers local authorities to light roads, but does not place a duty to do so.
- The Council has a duty of care to road users, and has an obligation to light obstructions on the highway.
- The Council has a statutory duty under the Highways Act, to ensure the safety of the highway, and this includes any lighting equipment placed on the highway.

6.2 The lighting referred to in this report is described as 'decorative' and accordingly its provision and proposed enhancement is discretionary and within the power of the Cabinet Member to approve in accordance with the recommendation.

7. Director of Finance's comments

7.1 Work is currently being undertaken to establish the detail of the proposed pilot scheme. This will be funded from existing budgets along with any contributions that can be secured for the scheme from external sources.

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Signed by:
Stephen Baily
Director of Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services

Appendices:

None

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location
None	

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by on

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Signed by:
Cabinet Member for Culture and City Development