

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE - 13 FEBRUARY 2001

CONDITION OF STREET LIGHTING COLUMNS

Report by the Director of Development Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the current condition of street lighting columns.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Since the formation of East Ayrshire Council approximately 1000 lighting columns have been replaced under the Council's capital replacement programme at an estimated cost of £1,100,000.
- 2.2 In common with most Local Authorities, East Ayrshire Council inherited a large stock of both Cohen and Stewart and Lloyd columns. These column types have caused serious maintenance problems and have collapsed causing death and injury elsewhere in the country.
- 2.3 Sufficient funding has been made available to ensure that the Council has been able to remove both these types of lighting columns within an acceptable timetable with minimal disruption to the public.
- 2.4 The Council has also embarked in an extensive programme of replacing lighting systems previously serviced by Scottish Power overhead cable networks in the last three years.

3. PAST FUNDING LEVELS

- 3.1 Although funding levels over the last five years have compared well in comparison with most other local authorities in Scotland, they were still on average less than half that recommended in the report submitted to committee in 1996.
- 3.2 The lack of capital funding over the last five years has resulted in approximately 700 additional lighting columns having to be replaced in an ad hoc basis under maintenance when they were found to be structurally unsafe during planned maintenance inspections. In some locations this has been so extensive that most of the lighting columns have been replaced bit by bit over the past ten to fifteen years. These lighting installations inevitably still use the original ScottishPower fifth core cable network and have excessive column spacing resulting in poor lighting levels. It is likely that these installations will require replacement long before the twenty five-year design life of the lighting columns has expired due to unreliable cabling or complaints about poor lighting levels.

3.3 Within the funds available priority has been given to replacing potentially dangerous installations to maintain the current level of service. Where replacement lighting is installed this is designed to meet current standards, which will normally be higher than existing installations. But no funds have been available for improving the standard of otherwise safe installations or lighting new areas.

4. FUTURE FUNDING LEVELS

4.1 With regular inspections most lighting installations can be made to safely exceed their original twenty five-year design life (typically thirty five to forty years). Unfortunately most the lighting installations in East Ayrshire were installed as part the housing boom of the 1950's and 1960's and are now at the end of their useful life. It is unlikely that many will provide a safe service beyond the next five to ten years.

4.2 The attached list is an update of the 1996 report and represents an estimate of the likely deterioration of the existing lighting stock based on past trends. The recommended average spend per annum should be considered the minimum level of investment in order to avoid lighting columns deteriorating to the point where they may collapse.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 To fund the minimum column replacement programme from appendix A the average required spend is :-

Years 1 to 5 - £288K per annum.

Years 6 to 10 - £ 461K per annum.

5.2 To fund a complete column replacement programme based on a thirty five years return period (ten years beyond design life) the average required spend is:-

£485K per annum

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The Council has a legal 'Duty of Care' to ensure that lighting equipment does not pose a safety risk to the public and its employees. The Health and Safety Executive has already prosecuted the London Borough of Westminster for a breach of HSE regulations following the collapse of a lighting column.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee

(a) note that the funding requirements set out at paragraph 5.1 above will be considered by the Director in bringing forward proposals for the capital programme and;

(b) agree that priority should continue to be given to essential replacement work to maintain the current level of service

Stephen Chorley
Director of Development Services
LP/NK
29 January 2001

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil

For further information please contact Len Paget on 01563 576310

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AGENDA