

**CABINET – 12 SEPTEMBER 2025****OUTCOME OF THE 18-MONTH MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL  
STRATEGY STREET LIGHTING DIMMING TRIAL****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT****PART A****Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to advise the Cabinet of the outcome of the 18-month street lighting dimming trial which took place from January 2023 to June 2025, and to seek the Cabinet's approval to dim County streetlights to 30% intensity from 20:00 hours to 07:00 hours permanently.

**Recommendations**

2. It is recommended that the Cabinet:
  - a) Notes the outcome of the trial;
  - b) Approves the dimming of County streetlights to 30% intensity from 20:00 hours until 07:00 hours; and
  - c) Authorises the Director of Environment and Transport to make alterations to the dimming of streetlights following feedback from Leicestershire Police and other key stakeholders in accordance with the approved risk assessment.

(KEY DECISION)

**Reasons for Recommendations**

3. The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2023/24 – 2026/27 identified potential savings by reducing the street lighting service. The following savings have been achieved through the trial:
  - a) Reduced street lighting energy costs by £539,759;
  - b) Reduced street lighting energy consumption by 1,442,770 kWh;
  - c) Reduced carbon emissions by 319.3 tonne.
4. The trial had a positive impact on reducing costs associated with the street lighting service while leaving lighting in place, albeit at reduced lighting levels.

5. Dimming of streetlights would result in future savings in the form of reduced future energy costs due to reduced energy consumption. However, if the price per unit of energy increases, associated electricity costs will also increase.
6. Delegation to the Director will enable a prompt response for any future issues that may arise.
7. Dimming of streetlights to 30% from 20:00 hours until 07:00 hours across the County is considered a “departure from standards” and does not meet criteria for lighting classes within the British Standard for roadway lighting BS5489. It therefore requires the Cabinet’s approval before it is implemented as a permanent measure.

### **Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)**

8. A report on the outcome of the 18-month street lighting dimming trial will be considered by the Highways and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 4 September 2025 and its comments will be reported to the Cabinet.
9. Subject to the Cabinet’s approval, the change will be implemented with immediate effect.

### **Policy Framework and Previous Decisions**

10. The MTFS 2023/24 – 2026/27, which was agreed by the County Council in February 2023, identified savings of £500,000 to be achieved by 2024/25 from the street lighting service. This was reduced to £430,000 in the 2024/25 MTFS following safety concerns raised as part of the consultation exercise and further exceptions to the dimming proposals. During 2024/25, a further £110,000 savings target was agreed for the 2025/26 MTFS as a result of savings being higher than expected due to changes in energy rate, bringing the total revised savings requirement to £540,000.
11. A reduction in street lighting will also support a reduction in carbon emissions (CO<sub>2</sub>e) set out in the Council’s Strategic Plan 2022-26, specifically, the Clean and Green strategic outcome. This is achieved by reducing energy use as part of the dimming trial to lower the lighting intensity to 30% (from the lighting unit’s full power) from 20:00 hours across the lighting stock which would support the reduction of 315 tonnes in CO<sub>2</sub>e as previously reported.
12. The Cabinet on 19 December 2023 noted the outcome of public consultation on the dimming of streetlights and approved a trial to dim street lighting, including on traffic routes, to 30% from 20:00 hours across the County.

### **Resource Implications**

13. The total annual energy costs for street lighting in 2024/25 was £1,975,921. The street lighting dimming has resulted in financial savings of £540,000, in line with the revised MTFS target.

14. Ongoing monitoring and review of the County streetlights will be required and will be undertaken in collaboration with Leicestershire Police. Lighting levels can be increased temporarily using the Central Management System (CMS) (a system that is used by the Council to remotely monitor, dim and turn on and off individual street lights) should the police request it, due to concerns around crime/anti-social behaviour in the specified areas.
15. Ongoing monitoring and review of accident statistics, as well as identifying any patterns or trends, may result in lighting levels being increased temporarily in areas where concerns are raised at high road traffic collision sites.
16. These tasks will require ongoing staff resource from the Street Lighting Team.
17. The Director of Law and Governance and the Director of Corporate Resources have been consulted on the content of this report.

#### **Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure**

18. This report will be circulated to all Members.

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## **PART B**

### **Background**

#### **Design Standards**

19. The design of safe and appropriate street lighting is governed by relevant British Standards, specialist guidance notes and a Code of Practice (Well Managed Highway Infrastructure 2016). The key principle of this Code is that Highway Authorities will develop their own levels of service, and the Code therefore provides guidance for authorities to consider when developing their approach in accordance with local needs, priorities and affordability.
20. One of the over-arching principles of the Code of Practice is the establishment of those local levels of service through risk-based assessment. For street lighting, the Code encourages 'the delivery of the right quality and amount of light in the right place and at the right time'.
21. The standards for street lighting are laid down in British Standard: BS.5489 and European Standard BS EN 13201. The standards provide guidance for the minimum amount of light on the highway, taking into account any hazards that may be present, speed limits and traffic counts.
22. Given that there is not a specific legal duty on the Council to provide lighting, it is considered that the risk of a judicial review challenge is low and in the event of a challenge, it is likely to be unsuccessful.

#### **Duty to Maintain Street Lighting**

23. The duty to maintain the highway under Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980 does not imply a duty to provide street lighting. Rather, local authorities have a discretion about whether to provide streetlights (Section 97 of the Highways Act 1980).
24. However, once street lighting is provided, the local authority has a duty to maintain the system in a safe condition. This is because local authorities can be held liable if they introduce a danger to the highway and fail to neutralise it (McCabe v Cheshire West and Chester Council 2014).
25. Street lighting touches not only on the issue of preventing road accidents. Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 provides that it shall be the duty of each authority to exercise its responsibilities to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area.

### **Dimming Trial**

26. The Council currently maintains approximately 70,190 street lighting assets.
27. The dimming trial took place from January 2024 until June 2025 and dimmed the vast majority of all streetlights in the County to 30% intensity from 20:00

hours until 07:00 hours, apart from those that met the criteria (listed below) of the risk assessment:

- a) Vertical traffic calming features;
- b) Town centres;
- c) Zebra crossings – in line with methodology for lighting zebra crossings, but at new reduced lighting levels, providing increased illumination on the crossing itself;
- d) Areas with evidenced increased night time crime/ant-social behaviour where maintaining streetlights at existing levels was supported by the police;
- e) Areas with increased night time road traffic accidents with increased killed or serious injuries at conflict areas;
- f) Currently illuminated steps.

28. The following were also monitored during the trial as part of the risk assessment:

- a) Increased pedestrian interactions with street furniture.
- b) Increased interactions between vehicles outside of conflict areas.
- c) Increased interactions between vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians outside of conflict areas.

29. Any streetlights that met the criteria of the risk assessment remained at their previous lighting levels.

### **Trial Findings**

30. Savings achieved during the trial period are shown in Figure 1 below. They consisted of:

- a) Total energy savings – 1,442,770 kWh,
- b) Total financial savings – £539,759,
- c) Total carbon savings – 319.3 tonnes.

Figure 1 – Savings achieved

Financial year	Description	Energy Saved (kWh)	Financial savings (£)	Carbon Savings (T)
2022/23	Baseline - Dimming to British Standards	n/a	n/a	n/a
2023/24	Implementation of 20:00 hours dimming to 30% power in Q4	370,688	£131,224	82.5

Financial year	Description	Energy Saved (kWh)	Financial savings (£)	Carbon Savings (T)
2024/25	First full year with 30% power at 20:00 hours	1,000,131	£391,997	223
2025/26	Q1 savings to end June 2025. End of trial period*	71,951	£16,538	13.9

\*Savings achieved due to better weather compared to same period last financial year.

### **Engagement from the Members of the Public During the Trial Period**

31. A public consultation exercise was undertaken in summer 2023 with members of the public pre-dimming street lighting trial, to identify any concerns the public may have. Following the consultation, the County Council's website was updated with a list of frequently asked questions, specifically relating to the dimming trial, as well as with a 'you said, we did' page. Members of the public were also encouraged to contact the Council if they had any concerns regarding the trial.
32. A total of seven customer enquiries were received during the trial specifically mentioning dimming of streetlights, with two citing fear of crime and five stating that the streetlights were not bright enough.
33. The police were contacted for their views on the two enquiries citing fear of crime but raised no concerns.
34. No changes were made to any street lighting programmes due to the enquiries received.
35. No complaints were received during the trial period.
36. No requests to install reflective strips on street furniture were received during the trial period.
37. Overall, there was minimal public reaction during the trial implying that most people did not notice the reduced street lighting levels or did not feel this represented an issue. Previous concerns regarding the potential for customer enquiries to increase had not materialised.

### **Insurance Claims**

38. A total of eight insurance claims were received during the trial period that mentioned street lighting, of which six related to vehicles or cyclists hitting potholes but did mention street lighting in their claim. The remaining two claims were due to trips within the highway.

39. To date, £70 has been paid to one claim which was due to a pothole and not street lighting but has been included because when the claim was submitted, it mentioned street lighting.

### **Road Traffic Collisions (RTC)**

40. Full year data during the trial for RTCs between 20:00 hours and 07:00 hours is shown in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2 – RTC data

	2022	2023	2024	2025*
No. of RTCs	30	64	50	29
Casualties	37	91	65	41
Slight	30	73	37	31
Serious	5	17	26	10
Fatal	2	1	2	0
Powered two-wheel	6	8	13	3
Cycles	2	2	11	0
Pedestrians	4	13	12	5
Child	0	2	3	0
60+	2	9	6	4

\*Data for 2025 is for January to June only; shading indicates trial period

41. Data for 2022 has been included for comparative purposes; 2023 is the baseline year but 2022 and 2023 RTC figures regard the pre-trial period, and lighting provided was in line with British Standard requirements for roadway lighting.
42. It is worth noting that the number of RTCs increased from 2022 to 2023. Data for 2022 may reflect the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic, that fewer journeys were still being made.
43. The total number of RTCs reduced in 2024 compared to the baseline data of 2023 before the trial was implemented.
44. However, the severity of accidents that occurred increased in 2024 and particularly for those using two-wheeled means of transport (i.e. motor bikes and bicycles). These RTCs occurred at roundabouts or major junctions (conflict areas), with no repeat RTCs at the same sites.

45. There may be other contributing factors at play and the reasons may not be attributed solely to street lighting being dimmed. Things like driver error, driver impairment, cyclists not wearing bright reflective clothing or using lights, and speeding could all potentially play a part in contributing to the increase.
46. The Authority will continue to monitor and review RTC statistics. It is able to return street lighting to previous lighting levels using the street lighting CMS, if a pattern appears or concerns in a particular area are raised.

### **Crime**

47. Requests to turn lights back to their original programme were managed during the trial in the same way as the existing part-night lighting requests.
48. Any request received from members of the public to turn up street lighting citing crime is referred to Leicestershire Police to confirm if crime has increased. If this is the case, brighter lighting would be reinstated for a period of three months to aid the police with their investigations. This would be reviewed after three months and either revert to the original programme or remain lit and then reviewed again after a period agreed with the police.
49. During the 18-month dimming trial, one request from the police was received to increase lighting levels - on Sidings Walk, Loughborough. This request affected two streetlights and changes were made in March 2025 using the CMS to reprogramme to the original lighting levels. The lighting levels for these lights are due to be reviewed again with the police in September 2025.
50. Figure 3 below compares night time crime statistics from 20:00 hours until 07:00 hours from 2023 and 2024.



Figure 3 – Night time crime statistics

2023									
Offence Group	Blaby	Charnwood	Harborough	Hinckley & Bosworth	Melton	NWLeics	Oadby & Wigston	County Total	
Burglary	224	344	104	174	58	182	143	1229	
Criminal Damage & Arson	195	557	144	259	150	323	143	1771	
Interference with Motor Vehicle	34	83	17	28	8	56	10	236	
Other Theft	104	189	69	104	50	118	33	667	
Robbery	7	22	5	13	4	14	6	71	
Sexual	110	200	77	92	59	109	64	711	
Theft Cycle	17	75	2	9	4	5	8	120	
Theft from Dwelling	5	25	2	13	5	7	5	62	
Theft from M/C or Meter	1					2		3	
Theft from Person	7	20	1	3	9	15	1	56	
Theft from Vehicle	129	192	54	85	21	182	39	702	
Theft of Motor Vehicle & TWOC	53	111	44	99	17	78	21	423	
Violence Against the Person	788	1894	717	1045	507	1206	524	6681	
Totals	1674	3712	1236	1924	892	2297	997	12732	
2024									
Offence Group	Blaby	Charnwood	Harborough	Hinckley & Bosworth	Melton	NWLeics	Oadby & Wigston	County Total	YOY % Change
Burglary	229	402	197	243	85	161	115	1432	16.52%
Criminal Damage & Arson	185	452	155	256	119	274	104	1545	-12.76%
Interference with Motor Vehicle	34	84	18	29	5	44	9	223	-5.51%
Other Theft	91	167	77	96	40	129	30	630	-5.55%
Robbery	11	44	4	12	6	12	6	95	33.80%
Sexual	88	196	79	105	35	99	36	638	-10.27%
Theft Cycle	10	58	3	12	1	5	12	101	-15.83%
Theft from Dwelling	10	19	5	14	2	13	3	66	6.45%
Theft from M/C or Meter		1		1				2	-33.33%
Theft from Person	9	21	3	13	6	14	7	73	30.36%
Theft from Vehicle	118	197	81	117	17	140	47	717	2.14%
Theft of Motor Vehicle & TWOC	60	108	32	78	17	93	17	405	-4.26%
Violence Against the Person	779	1678	610	1009	438	1010	450	5974	-10.58%
Totals	1624	3427	1264	1985	771	1994	836	11901	-6.53%
YOY % Change	-2.99%	-7.68%	2.27%	3.17%	-13.57%	-13.19%	-16.15%	-6.53%	

51. Overall, the number of night time crimes committed has fallen by 6.53% in 2024.
52. However, some types of crimes have increased since the trial was implemented including burglary, robbery, theft from dwelling, theft from person and theft from vehicle. The increase in these types of crimes may be due to reduced lighting levels, but there may also be a larger more complex societal issues at play, such as inflation, increased cost of living, reduction in living standards.
53. Looking at those crimes, robbery and theft from person are the most likely to occur on the highway. Data has been collated from 20:00 hours to 00:00 hours in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4 – Robbery and theft from person from 20:00 hours to 00:00 hours

	Blaby	Charnwood	Harborough	Hinckley & Bosworth	Melton	NWLeics	Oadby & Wigston
2023	6	20	3	11	6	15	4
2024	24	42	6	34	8	28	14
Increase	18	22	3	23	2	13	10
% increase	300%	110%	100%	209%	33%	87%	250%
Times increase	4.0	2.1	2.0	3.1	1.3	1.9	3.5

54. During the trial, Leicestershire Police did not raise any concerns with the County Council or ask for any lighting levels to be increased other than Siding Walk in Loughborough mentioned above.
55. For comparison, the data in Figure 5 below shows data for robbery and theft from person within Leicester City and Rutland between 20:00 hours and 00:00 hours.

Figure 5 – Crime comparison between Leicester City and Rutland

The Shire				
2023	65	Increase	% increase	Times increase
2024	156	91	240%	2.4
The City				
2023	154	Increase	% increase	Times increase
2024	394	240	256%	2.6
Rutland				
2023	3	Increase	% increase	Times increase
2024	8	5	267%	2.7

56. Both Leicester City and Rutland have seen increases in robbery and theft from person from 20:00 hours greater than Leicestershire. Neither Leicester City nor Rutland dim their streetlights to the extent Leicestershire has during the dimming trial.
57. Looking at anti-social behaviour, the data in Figure 6 below shows levels within Leicestershire both within the dimming time period and outside these times.

Figure 6 – Anti-social behaviour

Outside street light dimming non-affected times				Within street light dimming affected times			
CDRPName	2023	2024	YOY Increase %	CDRPName	2023	2024	YOY Increase %
Blaby	534	531	-0.56%	Blaby	144	235	63.19%
Charnwood	941	1449	53.99%	Charnwood	299	435	45.48%
Harborough	306	319	4.25%	Harborough	76	135	77.63%
Hinckley And Bosworth	446	526	17.94%	Hinckley And Bosworth	136	200	47.06%
Melton	238	280	17.65%	Melton	47	97	106.38%
North West Leicestershire	611	792	29.62%	North West Leicestershire	175	268	53.14%
Oadby and Wigston	266	302	13.53%	Oadby and Wigston	75	122	62.67%
<b>County Total</b>	<b>3342</b>	<b>4199</b>	<b>25.64%</b>	<b>County Total</b>	<b>952</b>	<b>1492</b>	<b>56.72%</b>

58. Anti-social behaviour had increased by 25.64% outside of the trial times but increased by 56.72% between 20:00 hours and 00:00 hours.

59. For comparison, Figure 7 below includes figures for anti-social behaviour for Leicester City and Rutland.

Figure 7 – Anti-social behaviour comparison

Street dimming non-affected times				Street dimming affected times			
CDRPName	2023	2024	YOY Increase %	CDRPName	2023	2024	YOY Increase %
Blaby	534	531	-0.56%	Blaby	144	235	63.19%
Charnwood	941	1449	53.99%	Charnwood	299	435	45.48%
Harborough	306	319	4.25%	Harborough	76	135	77.63%
Hinckley And Bosworth	446	526	17.94%	Hinckley And Bosworth	136	200	47.06%
Leicester	2790	3841	37.67%	Leicester	1034	1760	70.21%
Melton	238	280	17.65%	Melton	47	97	106.38%
North West Leicestershire	611	792	29.62%	North West Leicestershire	175	268	53.14%
Oadby and Wigston	266	302	13.53%	Oadby and Wigston	75	122	62.67%
Rutland	90	147	63.33%	Rutland	30	60	100.00%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>6222</b>	<b>8187</b>	<b>31.58%</b>	<b>Totals</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>3312</b>	<b>64.29%</b>

60. Outside of dimming trial times, Leicester City's anti-social behaviour levels had increased by 37.67% and Rutland's had increased by 63.33%.

61. During the dimming trial times, Leicester City's anti-social behaviour levels increased by 70.21% and Rutland's by 100%.

62. Neither Leicester City nor Rutland dim their streetlights to the same levels as the County Council and during the period of the dimming trial saw greater increases in anti-social behaviour than observed in the County.

## **Conclusions**

63. The dimming trial has delivered on its aim to reduce costs associated with the street lighting service, as shown in paragraph 3 of this report.

64. In 2024, the number of RTCs was reduced although severity of collisions increased. At present, there is no conclusive evidence that street lighting levels were a factor in this.
65. Overall levels of crime reduced during the dimming trial period; however, some types of crime have seen increases (including burglary, and thefts from dwellings, persons and vehicles). However, greater increases in these types of crimes were also recorded in Leicester City and Rutland which do not dim their streetlights to the extent done in the trial.
66. Levels of anti-social behaviour increased both during and outside the times when 30% dimming was applied. Again, greater increases in anti-social behaviour were recorded within Leicester City and Rutland.

### **Crime and Disorder Implications**

67. The Council will continue to work with the police to monitor and review crime and anti-social behaviour levels and temporarily increase lighting levels if required to aid the police in their investigations.

### **Equality Implications**

68. An Equality Impact Assessment (appended to this report) was undertaken on 30 October 2023 and again reviewed post-trial and found that the proposal may impact all protected characteristics (bar marriage and civil partnership) in terms of their ability to navigate the network, their perceived increases in crime, general safety and vulnerability and may change their current behaviour. This was identified as part of the consultation exercise undertaken in summer 2023.
69. Mitigation measures for concerns raised through the EIA are as follows:
  - a) Creation of a risk assessment to identify areas where lighting levels would not be changed.
  - b) Lighting to be retained at areas outside those identified in the risk assessment, albeit at reduced levels.
  - c) Monitor crime/anti-social behaviour levels with the police and amend lighting levels via the CMS if the police raised concerns.
  - d) Safety campaign on social media during winter months advising members of the public to stay visible during darker winter nights.
  - e) The possible installation of reflective strips on street furniture when enquiries were received to aid those with visual impairments.
  - f) Listening to communities and acting on any complaints or enquiries received.

### **Human Rights Implications**

70. There are no human rights implications arising from the content of this report.

## **Environmental Implications**

71. The trial had shown that the energy costs, energy consumption and carbon production associated with street lighting reduced as shown in paragraph 30 of this report. Dimming streetlights also reduced light pollution within the County due to reduced lighting levels.

## **Background Papers**

Energy Reduction For Street Lighting Project – Report to the Cabinet 15 December 2009 - <https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/documents/s42255/O%20-%20Energy%20Reduction.pdf>

Future Provision of Street Lighting – Report to the Cabinet 9 July 2015 - <https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/documents/s110476/5.Street%20Lighting.pdf>

Environment Strategy – Report to the Cabinet 6 July 2018 - <https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/documents/s138902/Environment%20Strategy%20Cabinet%206th%20July.pdf>

Leicestershire County Council Strategic Plan (May 2022) - <https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/documents/s168909/Appendix%20A%20-%20LCC%20Strategic%20Plan%202022-26.pdf>

Provisional Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023/24 - 2026/27 – Report to the Cabinet 10 February 2023 - <https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/documents/s174734/MTFS%202023-27.pdf>

Absence of Street Lighting May Prevent Vehicle Crime, but Spatial and Temporal Displacement Remains a Concern (January 2022) - <https://bit.ly/3lgwx0W>

Street Lighting proposed service changes – Report to the Cabinet 23 June 2023 - <https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MID=7077#AI75374>

## **Appendix**

Equality Impact Assessment

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