

A large magnifying glass is positioned over a photograph of a street lamp. The lamp is illuminated, casting a warm glow. The background consists of dense green and yellowing trees, suggesting an autumn setting. The magnifying glass's frame is dark, and its handle is visible on the right side. The overall composition is set against a dark, textured background that resembles a ceiling or a wall with a repeating pattern.

# Overview & Scrutiny Committee

## SCRUTINY PANEL NBC Owned Street Lighting Working Group

May 2016



**NORTHAMPTON**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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## Foreword

The objective of this Working Group was to differentiate between Northampton Borough Council (NBC) and Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) owned street lighting.

### Key lines of Enquiry

- Investigate all NBC owned street lighting, not just those in situ on housing land
- Differentiate between Northampton Borough Council (NBC) and Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) owned street lighting
- How the public can report problems and issues with street lighting
- Cost of NBC owned street lighting and energy consumption
- On-going costs for NBC street lighting

The Working Group was made up from Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Councillors Brian Oldham, Suresh Patel, Graham Walker and myself.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee set up the Working Group following receipt of an initial briefing paper on NBC owned street lighting on housing land. NBC owned street lighting has been an on-going issue for approximately four years. It had begun when Northamptonshire County Council had upgraded certain street lights and the query arose regarding ownership of some lighting columns. It is an historical issue. Previously, NBC street lighting had been mapped on the NCC mapping system but this is no longer the case.

Over a series of four meetings, the Working Group received various pieces of key information that informed this Scrutiny activity. A site visit took place to various locations in the borough so that Councillors could have sight of examples of NBC owned street lighting columns.

As part of its monitoring regime, Overview and Scrutiny will review this report six months after Cabinet has received it.

I would like to thank everyone who took part in this piece of work.



**Councillor Phil Larratt**  
**Chair, O&S NBC Owned Street Lighting Working Group**

### **Acknowledgements to all those who took part in the Review: -**

Councillors Brian Oldham, Suresh Patel and Graham Walker who sat with me on this Working Group  
Andrew Meakin, Interim Corporate Asset Manager, Darowen Jones, Consultant Project Manager and Nigel Hooper, Property Maintenance Manager, Northampton Borough Council, for providing key information to inform this Scrutiny activity

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The purpose of the Scrutiny Panel was to differentiate between Northampton Borough Council (NBC) and Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) owned street lighting.

### **Key lines of Enquiry**

- Investigate all NBC owned street lighting, not just those in situ on housing land
- Differentiate between Northampton Borough Council (NBC) and Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) owned street lighting
- How the public can report problems and issues with street lighting
- Cost of NBC owned street lighting and energy consumption
- On-going costs for NBC street lighting

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting on 29 July 2015, received a briefing paper on street lighting from Northampton Partnership Homes. Following discussion of this briefing paper, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee set up a Working Group to investigate NBC owned street lighting.

A short, sharp Scrutiny activity commenced in September 2015 and concluded in May 2016. The Working Group received various pieces of key information that informed this Scrutiny activity. A site visit took place to various locations in the borough so that Councillors could have sight of examples of NBC owned street lighting columns.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND KEY FINDINGS**

Key evidence was received, details of which are contained in the report. After gathering evidence the Scrutiny Panel established that: -

### **Energy Costs – NBC Street Lighting**

- 4.1 NBC is recharged for electricity used for specific events such as the Christmas lights. Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) purchases its electricity from Laser Group.
- 4.2 The Working Group acknowledges that there is a need to ensure the Council is getting the best possible price on electricity. It would be useful for NBC street lighting to be of low energy lighting. The Working Group noted

that NCC turns down its street lighting during night time hours, therefore reducing energy consumption.

- 4.3 There is no record of dedicated funding in respect of NBC owned street lighting with the exception of Christmas lighting.
- 4.4 There is no current identified revenue budget for the additional 744<sup>1</sup> street lighting.

### **Identification of Street Lighting**

- 4.5 The Working Group highlights the need for the inclusion of reference numbers on NBC owned street lighting columns that identify clearly they are owned and maintained by NBC.
- 4.6 It is felt that there is a need for discussions to take place between NBC, NCC and Balfour Beatty to ascertain whether it would be possible for NBC to “dovetail” onto its interactive mapping system. NCC will be provided with details of the NBC street lighting columns.

### **Public access to NBC owned street lighting columns**

- 4.7 When eastings and northings referencing is completed; the NBC owned street lighting will be plotted onto the Council’s interactive mapping system.
- 4.8 The Working Group emphasises the need for one clear reporting mechanism for the public regarding all NBC owned street lighting. It felt that the majority of street maintenance issues will be reported by the public to Street Doctor. The production of the Corporate Asset List will inform ownership of the street lighting.

### **Maintenance and repair costs – street lightings**

- 4.9 Evidence received details that each street lighting column costs around £30-£50 per year in electricity, depending on wattage, which can range from 30-150 watts. Maintenance costs for 744<sup>1</sup> lighting columns equates to approximately £50,000 per year. It is acknowledged that this amount could change when the Corporate Asset List is finalised. The Working Group felt that it would be beneficial for consideration to be given to looking at a shared street lighting specialist, with NPH, for the 744<sup>1</sup> NBC owned street lighting columns. It is further felt that maintenance would be cheaper if the test was undertaken in a programmed way; such as a number of columns tested in a day rather than on an ad hoc basis.

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<sup>1</sup> The figure of 744 street lighting columns could increase or decrease when the Corporate Asset List has been finalised.

- 4.10 Evidence received highlights that there is no revenue or capital budget for NBC owned street lighting and discussions will have to take place regarding assets and maintenance.

### **Invest to Save Programme - Street Lighting**

- 4.11 From the evidence received, the Working Group acknowledges the need for an Invest to Save Programme for NBC owned street lighting. Electricity costs for the 744<sup>1</sup> street lighting columns are in the region of £50,000 to £70,000 per annum. It recognises that NCC has installed energy efficient lighting.
- 4.12 The Working Group recognises that discussions between Northampton Borough Council, Northampton Partnership Homes and Northamptonshire Police regarding the need and appropriateness for lighting and what areas should/should not be lit should take place.
- 4.13 The Working Group acknowledges that there is a need to ascertain whether the current level of 744<sup>1</sup> lighting columns is required; for example the lighting of parks. The views of Northamptonshire Police would be useful.

### **Report It App.**

- 4.14 The Working Group highlights the value of the Report It App. and felt it would be useful for details of NBC owned street lighting to be included within the App.

### **Training**

- 4.15 Evidence received highlights the need for training of relevant officers, such as customer services staff, regarding the difference between NCC and NBC lighting and to which Authority maintenance issues should be reported to.
- 4.16 One clear reporting mechanism for problems with NBC owned street lighting need to be easily available for the public. A clear reporting mechanism, together with the interactive active mapping system, will make identification and reporting of street lighting columns easier.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The above overall findings have formed the basis for the following recommendations: -

The purpose of this Scrutiny Panel was to differentiate between Northampton Borough Council (NBC) and Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) owned street lighting.

### **Key lines of Enquiry**

- Investigate all NBC owned street lighting, not just those in situ on housing land
- Differentiate between Northampton Borough Council (NBC) and Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) owned street lighting
- How the public can report problems and issues with street lighting
- Cost of NBC owned street lighting and energy consumption
- On-going costs for NBC street lighting

The O&S NBC Owned Street Lighting Working Group recommends to Cabinet that:

5.1.1 The Working Group has pursued this Scrutiny activity as far as it can whilst accepting the Corporate Asset List is incomplete. It therefore recommends to Cabinet that the work is continued in the form of a Member/Officer Working Group. The purpose of this Working Group would be to complete the aims and objectives of this Scrutiny activity.

5.1.2 An Invest to Save Programme for NBC owned street lighting commences. The Programme should include:

- Energy costs
- Maintenance Costs
- Energy efficient lighting
- Need and appropriateness of lighting
- Areas that should/should not be lit

5.1.3 Consideration is given to entering into an agreement with Balfour Beatty for the ongoing repair and maintenance of NBC street lighting including a replacement programme.

5.1.4 The Business Case in relation to the Revenue and Capital budget for the Invest to Save Programme for NBC owned street lighting is completed in the 2016/2017 financial year and incorporated into future budgeting procedures.

5.1.5 Discussions between NBC, Northampton Partnership Homes and Northamptonshire Police are held regarding the need and

appropriateness for NBC owned street lighting and what areas should/should not be lit.

- 5.1.6 A reference number, identifying that the street lighting is under the ownership of NBC, is placed on each street lighting column with instructions how to report.
- 5.1.7 A clear reporting mechanism for issues with NBC owned street lighting is published and are easily accessible for both Officers and members of the public.
- 5.1.8 Discussions between NBC, Northamptonshire County Council and Balfour Beatty are held to ascertain whether it would be possible for NBC to “dovetail” onto its interactive mapping system. The NBC owned street lighting details is also plotted onto the NBC interactive mapping system.
- 5.1.9 The location and reference number of NBC owned street lighting is included within the Report It App.
- 5.1.10 Relevant Officers receive training about Northamptonshire County Council and NBC owned street lighting regarding where maintenance issues should be reported and how the location of the street lighting can be identified.

#### **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

- 5.1.11 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as part of its monitoring regime, reviews the impact of this report in six months’ time.



# **NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **Overview and Scrutiny**

### **Report of O&S NBC Owned Street Lighting Working Group**

#### **1 Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this Scrutiny activity was to differentiate between Northampton Borough Council (NBC) and Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) owned street lighting.

#### **Key lines of Enquiry**

- Investigate all NBC owned street lighting, not just those in situ on housing land
- Differentiate between Northampton Borough Council (NBC) and Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) owned street lighting
- How the public can report problems and issues with street lighting
- Cost of NBC owned street lighting and energy consumption
- On-going costs for NBC street lighting

#### **2 Context and Background**

- 2.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting on 29 July 2015, received a briefing paper on street lighting from Northampton Partnership Homes. Following discussion of this briefing paper, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee set up a Working Group to investigate NBC owned street lighting. A short, sharp Scrutiny activity commenced in September 2015 and concluded in May 2016.
- 2.2 This review links to the Council's corporate priorities, particularly corporate priority 2 - Invest in safer, cleaner neighbourhoods - Creating an attractive, clean and safe environment.
- 2.3 The Working Group established that the following needed to be investigated and linked to the realisation of the Council's corporate priorities.

## 2.4 Background data, including:

- Maintenance costs for NBC owned street lighting
- Street Lighting data
- Energy costs for both NBC and NCC street lighting
- Corporate List of all NBC owned street lighting to include:
  - Details of public knowledge to NBC owned street lighting columns
  - Reference numbers of street lighting columns
  - Energy costs for both NBC and NCC street lighting
  - Further maintenance and repair costs – street lighting
  - Report it app. – inclusion of reporting street lighting
- Site Visits

## 3 Evidence Collection

3.1 Evidence was collected from a variety of sources:

### 3.2 Background reports and information

3.2.1 Northampton Borough Council (NBC) is working with Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) over the exact ownership of lighting and lamp posts across the borough. The key determinants are land ownership and beneficial use. For example, if a lamp post is on NBC land but illuminates a highway – the responsibility is highways. In most cases however the responsibility and ownership will be clear.

#### Northampton Partnership Homes

3.2.2 Northampton Partnership Homes (NPH) has responsibility for street lights off the highway around some housing estates, including footpaths, garages, parking and pedestrian areas around blocks of flats.

3.2.3 Extensive cataloguing and condition survey assessment work has previously been carried out and this information transferred to NPH. Initial work has commenced on converting and adapting this data for incorporation into NPH asset management databases; covering 12,000 plus stock and neighbourhood areas where there are street lighting

upkeep responsibilities for NPH. The conversion of and input of data into the NPH asset management database will allow NPH to create planned more effective work regimes and reduce costly one off repair costs. In the meantime, NPH has assumed the repair and maintenance of the non-highway street lighting with issues reported by estate based staff and tenants. As of July 2015, there had been 8 reported repairs to street lighting maintained by NPH. The Northampton standard is now inclusive of the installation of front and rear security lights where required and these will in turn improve home security and enhance overall lighting levels.

### **3.2.4 Report It App.**

- 3.2.4.1 Following completion of the Street Lighting Reference Project, it is expected that NBC owned street lighting can be included within the Report It App.

#### **Street Lighting Data Housing Land**

- 3.2.4.2 An Asset Register of street lighting on housing land is available. 359 lighting columns were identified stating:

- Asset number
- Location
- Height
- Mounted/column
- Type and wattage
- Control
- Access

#### **Corporate Street Lighting Asset List**

- 3.2.4.3 A Corporate List of NBC Owned Street Lighting is available. As at 4 April 2016, in total, including 359 lighting columns on housing land, 744<sup>1</sup> lighting columns were identified. The List states:
- Asset number
  - Location
  - Easting
  - Northing
  - Type
  - Lamp type

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<sup>1</sup> The figure of 744 street lighting columns could increase or decrease when the Corporate Asset List has been finalised.

- Lamp code
- Height
- Lantern type

### **3.3 Background statistics**

#### **3.3.1 NBC Owned Street Lighting – Running and Maintenance Costs**

3.3.1.1 In general, each street lighting column costs around £30-£50 per year in electricity depending on wattage which can range from 30-150 watts. Maintenance costs for 744<sup>1</sup> lighting columns equates to approximately £50,000 per year. The maintenance cost for NCC's PFI lighting is around £20 - £25 per column per year. The full costings cannot be finalised until the accuracy of the Corporate Asset Register has been confirmed.

3.3.1.2 Each lighting column must have a five year electrical test that costs in the region of £50 per column.

3.3.1.3 Street lighting columns must have a seven yearly structural test. This is a visual test and includes the panel being opened to check for corrosion if steel. Concrete columns are checked for cracks. The cost of this test is in the region of £50 to £100 per column.

3.3.1.4 A non-destructive test can also be applied at a cost of £100-£150 per column. This only takes place if there is an obvious need for the column to be tested.

3.3.1.5 Maintenance to NBC owned street lighting is on an ad-hoc basis. Reports are received by the Property Maintenance Helpdesk. An electrical contractor is used for the repairs and maintenance.

### **3.4 Site Visits**

3.4.1 Late afternoon on Monday, 16 November 2015, representatives from the Working Group, together with Officers, attended a site visit. Councillors met at the Water Tower, Bouverie Road, Hardingstone, and observed the lighting on the footpath between Hardy Drive and Bouverie Road.

Key findings:

- Four lighting columns (sodium lighting), all without asset numbers, are in situ along the footpath to the water tower and in the former garage site
- A switch for one of the lighting columns is located inside a resident's bungalow
- Councillors noted that that this area is predominantly older people's accommodation and this footpath is generally well used by residents of sheltered accommodation walking to Bouverie House
- Community Pay Back is scheduled to clear part of the area
- The lighting appeared in poor condition and not all columns came on. It was felt that fewer lighting columns, perhaps three, positioned differently would improve lighting in this area, and be more energy efficient. It was noted that white lighting creates more light than that of yellow lamps



3.4.2 The Working Group then observed the lighting in front of the bungalows and Bouverie House.

Key findings:

- Two lighting columns are positioned in the lawned area in front of the bungalows. It was felt these did not generate enough lighting to light up the footpath around the bungalows.
- Councillors queried whether these lighting columns were general fund or HRA inventory
- PIR lighting has been put up on Bouverie House which was felt to be of benefit to the area
- Councillors suggested that lighting in this area required improvement



3.4.3 The Working Group travelled to the car park at the Picnic Area on Bedford Road, next to the Holiday Inn, and observed street lighting.

Key findings:

- Three dome headed lamps are in situ at the picnic area. None were working at the time of the site visit. None of the lighting columns had asset numbers. It was felt that the dome lamps could warrant cleaning.
- Councillors advised of anti-social behaviour in this area in the evenings and working lighting columns would act as a deterrent. The area also suffers from littering problems. Community Pay Back has cleared this area in the past
- Councillors commented that there is a need to improve the lighting in this area



3.4.4 The Working Group observed street lighting in Priory Close.

Key findings:

- Priory Close consists of sheltered housing
- One lighting column is in place on the footpath around the bungalows. It has “asset number 2” detailed on it. Councillors advised that previously this lighting column had been switched off by Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) and a “switched off” sticker

placed on the lighting column. This has been removed and the light is switched on

- Councillors noted that the bungalows have outside lighting installed with “white lights”, which gives better lighting to that of the yellow lighting of the street lamp



3.4.5 The site visit was wrapped up with a short visit to the housing complex on the corner of Billing road and Cliftonville House.

Key findings:

- The housing complex is made up of flats. CCTV cameras are installed on the outside of the building, along with four wall mounted lamps that were not on
- The street lamp to the entrance to the flats was on at the time of the site visit
- The other street lamp is out and has an NCC notice placed on it “switched off”



- 4 After all of the evidence was collated the following conclusions were drawn:

### **Energy Costs – NBC Street Lighting**

- 4.1 NBC is recharged for electricity used for specific events such as the Christmas lights. Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) purchases its electricity from Laser Group.
- 4.2 The Working Group acknowledges that there is a need to ensure the Council is getting the best possible price on electricity. It would be useful for NBC street lighting to be of low energy lighting. The Working Group noted that NCC turns down its street lighting during night time hours, therefore reducing energy consumption.
- 4.3 There is no record of dedicated funding in respect of NBC owned street lighting with the exception of Christmas lighting.
- 4.4 There is no current identified revenue budget for the additional 744<sup>1</sup> street lighting.

### **Identification of Street Lighting**

- 4.5 The Working Group highlights the need for the inclusion of reference numbers on NBC owned street lighting columns that identify clearly they are owned and maintained by NBC.
- 4.6 It is felt that there is a need for discussions to take place between NBC, NCC and Balfour Beatty to ascertain whether it would be possible for NBC to “dovetail” onto its interactive mapping system. NCC will be provided with details of the NBC street lighting columns.

### **Public access to NBC owned street lighting columns**

- 4.7 When eastings and northings referencing is completed; the NBC owned street lighting will be plotted onto the Council’s interactive mapping system.

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<sup>1</sup> The figure of 744 street lighting columns could increase or decrease when the Corporate Asset List has been finalised.



- 4.8 The Working Group emphasises the need for one clear reporting mechanism for the public regarding all NBC owned street lighting. It felt that the majority of street maintenance issues will be reported by the public to Street Doctor. The production of the Corporate Asset List will inform ownership of the street lighting.

### **Maintenance and repair costs – street lightings**

- 4.9 Evidence received details that each street lighting column costs around £30 - £50 per year in electricity, depending on wattage, which can range from 30-150 watts. Maintenance costs for 744<sup>1</sup> lighting columns equates to approximately £50,000 per year. It is acknowledged that this amount could change when the Corporate Asset List is finalised. The Working Group felt that it would be beneficial for consideration to be given to looking at a shared street lighting specialist, with NPH, for the 744<sup>1</sup> NBC owned street lighting columns. It is further felt that maintenance would be cheaper if the test was undertaken in a programmed way; such as a number of columns tested in a day rather than on an ad hoc basis.
- 4.10 Evidence received highlights that there is no revenue or capital budget for NBC owned street lighting and discussions will have to take place regarding assets and maintenance.

### **Invest to Save Programme - Street Lighting**

- 4.11 From the evidence received, the Working Group acknowledges the need for an Invest to Save Programme for NBC owned street lighting. Electricity costs for the 744<sup>1</sup> street lighting columns are in the region of £50,000 to £70,000 per annum. It recognises that NCC has installed energy efficient lighting.
- 4.12 The Working Group recognises that discussions between Northampton Borough Council, Northampton Partnership Homes and Northamptonshire Police regarding the need and appropriateness for lighting and what areas should/should not be lit should take place.
- 4.13 The Working Group acknowledges that there is a need to ascertain whether the current level of 744<sup>1</sup> lighting columns is required; for example the lighting of parks. The views of Northamptonshire Police would be useful.

## **Report It App.**

- 4.14 The Working Group highlights the value of the Report It App. and felt it would be useful for details of NBC owned street lighting to be included within the App.

## **Training**

- 4.15 Evidence received highlights the need for training of relevant officers, such as customer services staff, regarding the difference between NCC and NBC lighting and to which Authority maintenance issues should be reported to.
- 4.16 One clear reporting mechanism for problems with NBC owned street lighting need to be easily available for the public. A clear reporting mechanism, together with the interactive active mapping system, will make identification and reporting of street lighting columns easier.

## **5**

### **Recommendations**

- 5.1 The purpose of the Scrutiny Panel was to differentiate between Northampton Borough Council (NBC) and Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) owned street lighting.

#### **Key lines of Enquiry**

- Investigate all NBC owned street lighting, not just those in situ on housing land
- Differentiate between Northampton Borough Council (NBC) and Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) owned street lighting.
- How the public can report problems and issues with street lighting
- Cost of NBC owned street lighting and energy consumption
- On-going costs for NBC street lighting

The Overview & Scrutiny NBC owned Street Lighting Working Group therefore recommends to Cabinet that:

- 5.1.1 The Working Group has pursued this Scrutiny activity as far as it can whilst accepting the Corporate Asset List is incomplete. It therefore recommends to Cabinet that the work is continued in the form of a Member/Officer Working Group. The purpose of this Working Group would be to complete the aims and objectives of this Scrutiny activity.

- 5.1.2 An Invest to Save Programme for NBC owned street lighting commences. The Programme should include:
- Energy costs
  - Maintenance Costs
  - Energy efficient lighting
  - Need and appropriateness of lighting
  - Areas that should/should not be lit
- 5.1.3 Consideration is given to entering into an agreement with Balfour Beatty for the ongoing repair and maintenance of NBC street lighting including a replacement programme.
- 5.1.4 The Business Case in relation to the Revenue and Capital budget for the Invest to Save Programme for NBC owned street lighting is completed in the 2016/2017 financial year and incorporated into future budgeting procedures.
- 5.1.5 Discussions between NBC, Northampton Partnership Homes and Northamptonshire Police are held regarding the need and appropriateness for NBC owned street lighting and what areas should/should not be lit.
- 5.1.6 A reference number, identifying that the street lighting is under the ownership of NBC, is placed on each street lighting column with instructions how to report.
- 5.1.7 A clear reporting mechanism for issues with NBC owned street lighting is published and are easily accessible for both Officers and members of the public.
- 5.1.8 Discussions between NBC, Northamptonshire County Council and Balfour Beatty are held to ascertain whether it would be possible for NBC to “dovetail” onto its interactive mapping system. The NBC owned street lighting details is also plotted onto the NBC interactive mapping system.
- 5.1.9 The location and reference number of NBC owned street lighting is included within the Report It App.
- 5.1.10 Relevant Officers receive training about Northamptonshire County Council and NBC owned street lighting regarding where maintenance issues should be reported and how the location of the street lighting can be identified.

## **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

- 5.1.11 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as part of its monitoring regime, reviews the impact of this report in six months' time.