

Leicestershire County Council Consultation

Street Lighting Proposed Service Changes, reducing light levels between 8pm to 10pm down to 30% output.

We propose to reduce lighting intensity to 30% from 8pm. Lighting will remain on but will be slightly dimmer than current levels for the hours between 8-10pm, from which time most residential lights are already dimmed to 30% from 10pm.

Following consultation and approval of LCC's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2023-27, savings must be made from street lighting budgets of £500k per year (with £150k in 2023/24). This can only be achieved by reducing either the time that lights are on or their brightness. In carrying out this operation there will be some 350 tonnes of carbon saved or 1.3 million kwh of energy.

The changes are proposed to be county-wide and will impact all areas covered by LCC-owned and managed street lighting.

In doing that, however, there may be locations that will be of concern and there may need to be exceptions to this change, so we want to engage communities on their views on those potential exceptions.

Several individuals or community groups with protected characteristics were identified as part of the Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) screening that could be affected by the Strategy update, and these included:

Age:

People may not be directly impacted simply because of their age, but the elderly are likely to be disproportionately impacted if they have mobility, frailty, vision or confidence issues. There is a potential higher risk of slips, trips and falls due to the lower lighting levels as well as a possible increase in road traffic collisions.

They may also have a perception of being more at risk of crime or anti-social behaviour. This could impact on their choices about evening activities, which may mean an increase in social isolation for some.

Disability:

People are likely to be adversely impacted depending on the nature of their disability. Some disabilities, such as visual impairment or mobility could mean the proposals make things more difficult and potentially increase risk of slips, trips and falls.

Retaining a reduced level of lighting will mitigate some of this, but particularly for those who are visually impaired, this could be insufficient. Other mitigations could include use of reflective strips on potential hazards.

People in this group may also have a perception of being more at risk of crime or anti-social behaviour. This could impact on their choices about evening activities, which may mean an increase in social isolation for some.

Race:

People in this group may have a perception of being more at risk of racially motivated crime or anti-social behaviour. This could impact on their choices about evening activities, which may mean an increase in social isolation for some. However, the proposal to retain lighting, albeit at a reduced level, should reduce the adverse impacts to some extent.

Sex:

Recent higher rates of violence against women in public places could be of concern. Women may have a real or perceived risk of being affected by this. This could impact on their choices about evening activities, which may mean an increase in social isolation for some.

However, the proposal to retain lighting, albeit at a reduced level, should help reduce the adverse impacts to some extent.

Gender Reassignment:

Some people at any stage of gender reassignment may have a perception of being more at risk of crime or anti-social behaviour. This could impact on their choices about evening activities, which may mean an increase in social isolation for some.

However, the proposal to retain lighting, albeit at a reduced level, should help reduce the adverse impacts to some extent.

Marriage & Civil Partnership:

Currently there are no known concerns for people falling within this group.

Sexual Orientation:

LGBT+ residents may feel fearful and vulnerable to hate incident/crime because of this proposal. This could impact on their choices about evening activities, which may mean an increase in social isolation for some.

However, the proposal to retain lighting, albeit at a reduced level, should help reduce the adverse impacts to some extent.

Pregnancy and Maternity:

A potential greater risk of slips, trips and falls may disproportionately impact some who are pregnant.

Retaining a reduced level of lighting will mitigate some of this. Other mitigations could include use of reflective strips on potential hazards.

Some people in this group may also have a perception of being more at risk of crime or anti-social behaviour. This could impact on their choices about evening activities, which may mean an increase in social isolation for some.

There may also be concerns about travel to access maternity care during the hours impacted in the proposal.

Religion or Beliefs:

The proposal could impact members of faith communities attending or returning from places of worship during the times affected by the proposals.

There may be a perception of increased risk of violence or anti-social behaviour against this group.

However, the proposal to retain lighting, albeit at a reduced level, should help reduce the adverse impacts to some extent.

Other groups: e.g., rural isolation, deprivation, health inequality, carers, asylum seeker and refugee communities, looked after children, deprived, members of the armed forces, or disadvantaged communities

Some people in any of these other groups may have a perception of being more at risk of crime or anti-social behaviour. This could impact on their choices about evening activities, which may mean an increase in social isolation for some.

However, the proposal to retain lighting, albeit at a reduced level, should help reduce the adverse impacts to some extent.

In addition to possible fear of increase in crime and anti-social behaviour, carers may also have concerns with the lower-level lighting when travelling during late or early hours to carry out their duties.

What concerns have been identified?

- Disproportionate adverse impact on people with certain disabilities and/or vulnerabilities through greater risk of personal injury (slips/trips/fall).
- Potential perception of being more at risk of crime or antisocial behaviour for several protected and other groups.

What action is planned?

- Communicating modest changes in lighting levels from 8-10pm across the county.
- Engagement to identify sites for which the proposals may not be suitable
- Review of risks and development of a suitable and proportionate risk assessment of the proposal.

Way forward.

- The findings of all engagement will feed into the risk assessment which will inform the final report seeking a Cabinet decision in November (maybe Jan '24?).
- Please see the link below re public consultation:
<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/have-your-say/current-engagement/street-lighting-service-changes>