

Culture, Leisure & Recreation Committee

Date:	19 March 2013
Title:	Christmas Lighting Options
Purpose of the Report:	To consider the options for the lighting contract
Contact Officer:	Rob Goss, Project Officer

Background

The Town Council has no statutory responsibility for the provision of Christmas lights. However, lights in the town centre provide an enjoyable festive shopping experience for the residents of Thame and visitors to the town. It is estimated that approximately 30% of retail sales and associated profits occur during the Christmas period stretching from November to January. It is therefore an important time for the retail sector.

In 2007 the existing lighting contract was awarded to Lamps and Tubes, who currently carry out the installation, maintenance and storage of the lighting scheme. The scheme was added to in 2011 by funding obtained via 21st Century Thame.

Although there were some problems with the service provided by this company in the first few years of the contract, in the last 3 years they have performed to schedule and the Council has been largely satisfied with the service they have provided.

The existing contract with Lamps and Tubes expires on the 23 August 2013 in all areas, giving Council the opportunity to review the existing arrangements and if necessary put the works out for tender.

Options Analysis**Option 1: Retender the contract, leasing lights under a new scheme**

- a) New lights would enable the Council to tailor requirements to take advantage of new technologies, e.g. energy efficient lighting and newer designs.
- b) If the Council chooses to reduce or increase the expenditure on the lighting scheme then this may be better suited to a whole new scheme.
- c) Areas can be re-assessed for their requirement for lighting; the shop owners in North Street have contacted the Council asking if the scheme could be extended to them.
- d) The maintenance team have potential space in the Lupton Road depot to store the lights with a potential saving cost of £1037 on the current storage cost. However if stored at the depot an agreement would need to be made with the contractor as to an extra maintenance requirement.

- e) If the lights are leased, the supplier/installer is ultimately responsible for the maintenance of the decorations each year.
- f) At the end of the contract the Council can simply return them or choose to purchase for a nominal fee. Elements of the existing scheme could be purchased and incorporated into any new tender.

Option 2: Purchase the existing lighting scheme

- a) Elements where the lighting could be purchased at prices shown in the resource appraisal.
- b) Most of the existing scheme is now 5 years old and maintenance costs are likely to increase as they get older. Aesthetically the display still looks good, however, some elements are likely to start to show their age; LED wire lights fade after a period meaning a uniform colour is unable to be obtained if elements have to be replaced.
- c) It should be noted that the Christmas tree lights are not being sold due to their poor condition. Purchasing new lights would be an additional £2000 to replace old with new to a similar standard. To have a state of the art display with cutting edge DMX technology (DMX is a standard system for controlling multi coloured programmable LED lights) would cost ???.
- d) Purchasing lights could be a cheaper option, when costs are obtained. However, there are other costs associated with this. The cost for testing and maintenance of the decorations is likely to increase as the lights get older and contractor needs to be hired to install and remove the decorations each year. This currently cost is in the region of £6,920 p.a. however this is for the whole scheme including the 21st Century Thame project scheme.
- e) Energy efficient bulbs last longer than standard lamps and use less electricity. Most of the existing scheme uses part LED lighting, however some of the bulbs used are not energy efficient and therefore the maintenance costs in the resource appraisal incorporate their replacement.

Option 3: Cease funding of lighting scheme

- a) The Council could cease funding due to budget pressures. (This approach is not likely to be welcomed or be easy to achieve and could result in bad PR).
- b) A condition of tender should be that the display be more energy efficient. Any other conditions of tender should be identified through the discussion of this report, i.e. colour of bulbs, preference to types of display etc.

Risk Assessment

Risks	Controls
The lights will require safe storage.	The lights when stored take up a space of 20ft x 10ft (space of a single garage) Currently the Council pay to store these lights off site. The Maintenance Depot could potentially store the lights out of season. Costs will be incurred to purchase racking equipment suitable to house these lights.
The Council will need to engage a reliable installer.	Ensure that the company responsible for putting up the scheme has suitable insurances, relevant experience and has tested machinery to legal standards.
Undertake the annual maintenance and repair work.	The contractor carrying out the electrical testing each year must ensure this is done to legal requirements. It would be advantageous if the company had relevant experience in the regime of testing Christmas lights. Some of the equipment is bespoke and therefore a specialist contractor may need to be employed. If the lights were stored at the depot they could be tested on site which would take 1 day to PAT test and 3 – 4 days to carry out maintenance.

Resource Appraisal

Below, is a summary of the costs incurred by the Council in the 2012 season detailing the various elements of work? These costs can be used to estimate the financial implications of each option in future schemes.

Existing Costs	Cost Per Annum
Annual hire cost of main scheme	£9873
Installation, maintenance and removal of main scheme	£5770
Total storage cost of lighting display	£1037
Extra Maintenance charges	£201
Total Main Scheme Costs (Current TTC budget £17,000)	£16881

Annual hire cost of 21 st Century addition	£793
Installation, maintenance and removal of 21 st Century Scheme	£1150
Total 21st Century Thame Costs	£1943

Future maintenance Costs of existing scheme

Decoration Type	Likely Maintenance Required
Cross street decorations	£2.90 per replacement bulb (40 bulbs in total)
2m x 3m Curtains; <i>Around Market House</i>	1 replacement 2 x3m LED curtain set is £268 – There are 12 Curtains
<i>Although it is not possible to predict the exact repairs that will be required the following costs can be used to obtain a budgetary figure</i>	
To carry out pre-season testing of all lighting	£390 per year

To carry out pre-season and in season repairs to all features	£600 per year
To carry out PAT testing to all features	£315 per year

Decoration Type	Scheme	Condition	Qty	Total Cost
Cross street decorations	Main Scheme (2007)	Good	2	£500
LED Stars; <i>hanging from the Town Hall</i>	Main Scheme (2007)	Good	14	£980
LED Stars – Ice White	Main Scheme (2007)	Good	4	£280
Filament clear star; <i>Town hall above Clerks office</i>	Main Scheme (2007)	Good	1	£40
Branches; <i>hanging from High Street brackets</i>	Main Scheme (2007)	Good	18	£1800
Tombe D’Etioules (swan walk)	Main Scheme (2007)	Good	14	£2100
3D Zenith Star; <i>Greyhound Walk and Buttermarket</i>	Main Scheme (2007)	Fair	16	£1600
Lamp post headed column decoration 3 star; <i>Swan Walk</i>	21 st Century Thame (2010)	Good	2	£250
Mistletoe stars white / blue; <i>Upper High Street Car Park</i>	Main Scheme (2007)	Fair	23	£1955
2m x 3m Curtains; <i>Around Market House</i>	Main Scheme (2007)	Poor (in need of repair)	12	£100
Total Cost				£10,055

24V white LED	Replacement		10	£760
24V blue	Replacement		10	£580

	Alternative replacement			£2100
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21st Century Thame used Seeda grant funding to extend the scheme into Swan Walk and the Upper High Street in 2010. This funding has now expired.

Recommendation:

The Committee is recommended:

- i) To agree which option or combination of options to pursue:***
 - 1. Retender the contract, leasing lights under a new scheme – agree extent on plan if required.***
 - 2. Purchase the existing lighting scheme – agree extent on plan if required.***
 - 3. Cease funding of lighting scheme.***
- ii) If required agree which decorations the council should investigate purchasing to incorporate into the new scheme. – agree extent on plan if required.***
- iii) To agree to undertake the storage of the decorations in the Maintenance depot.***