



Democratic Services

Location: Phase II
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**To: COUNCILLOR EDDIE LAVERY
CABINET MEMBER FOR RESIDENTS' SERVICES**

c.c. All Members of the Residents' Services Select Committee

c.c. Haley Thomas, Place Directorate

c.c. Perry Scott, Corporate Director of Place

Date: 07 July 2022

Non-Key Decision request

Form D

Christmas Lights 2022 Programme Report

Dear Cabinet Member

Attached is a report requesting that a decision be made by you as an individual Cabinet Member. Democratic Services confirm that this is not a key decision, as such, the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 notice period does not apply.

You should take a decision **on or after Friday 15 July 2022** in order to meet Constitutional requirements about publication of decisions that are to be made. You may wish to discuss the report with the Corporate Director before it is made. Please indicate your decision on the duplicate memo supplied, and return it to me when you have made your decision. I will then arrange for the formal notice of decision to be published.

James Jones
Democratic Services Apprentice

Title of Report: Christmas Lights 2022 Programme Report

Decision made:

Reasons for your decision: (e.g. as stated in report)

Alternatives considered and rejected: (e.g. as stated in report)

SignedDate.....

Cabinet Member for Residents' Services

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS 2022 PROGRAMME REPORT

Cabinet Member	Councillor Eddie Lavery
Cabinet Portfolio	Cabinet Member for Residents' Services
Officer Contact	Hayley Thomas, Place Directorate
Papers with report	None

HEADLINES

Summary	This report sets out the recommended delivery programme for the 2022 Christmas Lights programme for Cabinet Member approval.
Putting our Residents First	This report supports the following Council objectives of: <i>Our People; Our Built Environment; Our Heritage and Civic Pride; Strong financial management.</i>
Financial Cost	£216,186k funded via a combination of Christmas Lighting base budgets and earmarked reserves
Relevant Select Committee	Residents' Services Select Committee
Relevant Wards	All

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Cabinet Member for Residents' Services:

- 1. Approves the Christmas Lights programme for 2022 as set out within this report at a total anticipated cost of £216,186 including displays and Christmas trees; and**
- 2. Authorises the direct grant awards to the four community organisations who manage their lighting schemes directly, as set out in the report.**

Reasons for recommendation

Christmas, as well as being about family time and celebration is a critical trading period for town centres and especially the smaller independent businesses within them. The Hillingdon 2022 Christmas Lights programme is expected to provide a much-appreciated uplift for residents and businesses across all 21 wards within the Borough.

The 2022 Christmas Lights programme will be delivered by Event Power Engineering, appointed on a 2+1+1 year contract from August 2021. This tendering exercise has ensured that the overall

£216,186 anticipated cost of the 2022 Christmas Lights programme, subject to confirmation of the community contributions, compares favourably with the 2021 actual cost of £222,743.

Alternative options considered / risk management

The Cabinet Member could decide not to accept the recommendations. This would mean that the Christmas lights programme planned for 2022 would not be implemented as recommended and the subsequent benefits to residents and businesses could not be fully realised.

Democratic compliance / previous authority.

The contract for the Christmas Lights contract has previously been approved by Members and this report sets out the programme for cabinet Member approval. The Cabinet Member can also authorise expenditure externally for approved initiatives, as per the Council's Constitution.

Select Committee comments

None at this stage.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Christmas lighting displays are highly valued and appreciated by residents and businesses, playing an important part of how Christmas is celebrated in town and neighbourhood centres. In 2021, for the first time, 24/7 Christmas lighting schemes were supported for residents to enjoy and to add sparkle to high streets and shopping parades within all wards across the Borough and this will continue in 2022.

Full details of all the lighting schemes to be supported across the Borough are provided in the table below:

Christmas Lighting Programme 2022			
Council Managed			Community Schemes
Belmore Parade	Harmondsworth Village	Ruislip Town Centre	Ickenham
Blenheim Parade	Hayes Bridge Parade	Ryefield Avenue	Northwood
Byron Parade	Hayes End Parade	Sipson Village	Northwood Hills
Civic Centre, Uxbridge	Hayes Town Centre	South Ruislip	Ruislip Manor
Crescent Parade	Hillingdon Circus	Sutton Court Road	
Eastcote Town Centre	Kingshill Avenue	Uxbridge Town Centre	
Glebe Estate	Kingsway Parade	Yeading Lane Parade	
Harefield Village	Marlborough Parade	Yiewsley & West Drayton	
Harlington High Street	New Broadway Parade		
Harmondsworth Road	North Hyde Road		

Within the proposed 2022 Christmas Lighting Programme, 28 schemes are directly managed by the Council and four schemes are organised independently by community or business representatives. For these community-led schemes it is requested the Cabinet Member authorise direct grant awards to the organisations (totalling £44,496) as follows:

- 1) Ickenham - Ickenham Festival - £11,851
- 2) Northwood - Northwood Residents Association - £9,800
- 3) Northwood Hills - Northwood Hills Residents Association £7,925
- 4) Ruislip Manor - Ruislip Manor Chamber of Commerce £14,920

The community-led schemes each appoint their own preferred contractor to deliver the Christmas lighting effects. As a benchmark, the cost for each scheme was compared to an indicative cost provided by the Council's own contractor, Event Power Engineering, to ensure that best value has been achieved.

Traditionally, the Christmas light switch on has acted as a significant event in terms of encouraging greater footfall and local spending, at a time when many small independent retailers are struggling with the competition from online shopping. Christmas 2022 will be the first time that residents and businesses will be able to celebrate Christmas traditions free of Covid-19 restrictions that had been necessary in response to the pandemic.

The removal of timers trialled in 2021 gave the opportunity for residents including school children to appreciate the Christmas lights during both the morning and afternoon commute. The benefits of 24/7 Christmas lights achieved from the 2021 trial included:

- Boost to residents and high street businesses and greater value for money from lighting displays throughout daylight and evening hours.
- Evidenced cost avoidance from no night-time scouting and timer repairs.
- Environmental vehicle emission reductions from no regular scouting crews across the Borough.

Based on feedback from residents and businesses, 24/7 Christmas lighting is recommended to continue in 2022 and future years.

Financial Implications

The estimated cost of the 2022 programme, net of expected community partner contributions, is set out in the table below:

Christmas Lighting Programme 2022	Cost
Event Power Engineering - tendered cost for 28 schemes including support for events	154,445
Grant funding for four Community-led schemes	44,496
Christmas trees (8)	13,025
Barriers and banners for Christmas trees	3,460
Licences and other event costs (<i>including Community partners</i>)	5,370
LBH Highways infrastructure	5,840
Sub-total	226,636

Expected partner contributions (<i>subject to confirmation</i>)	(10,450)
Total	216,186

The base budget in the General Fund for Christmas lighting schemes is £126k, with an additional £104k balance currently available in the Christmas Lights earmarked reserve. Based on the cost schedule set out above, a drawdown of £90k from the reserve will be required to support the estimated cost of the Christmas Lighting Programme for 2022 (leaving a balance of £14k).

Funding for Christmas lighting schemes in 2023 and beyond is currently subject to review and will be addressed as part of the Council's forthcoming 2023/24 MTFF planning process.

RESIDENT BENEFIT & CONSULTATION

The benefit or impact upon Hillingdon Residents' Services users and communities

Christmas lights in town centres and local parades enhance their attractiveness to residents and shoppers and creates a "feel-good" factor during the season which helps to sustain thriving high streets.

The Hillingdon Christmas Lights programme realises many social and economic benefits particularly in terms of support for smaller, independent businesses relying on Christmas shoppers to come out in force and bring some balance to the books after an exceptionally challenging year for residents and businesses alike.

Consultation carried out or required

Organisers of the community-led Christmas lighting schemes have been consulted on their arrangements for 2022.

Concept designs for each of the 28 schemes directly managed by the Council will be shared and agreed with the relevant Ward Councillors before being confirmed with Event Power Engineering Ltd. to install.

CORPORATE CONSIDERATIONS

Corporate Finance

Corporate Finance has reviewed this report and concurs with the financial implications set out above, noting that the contract to Event Power Engineering Limited for the provision of Christmas lighting displays was approved in 2021 on a 2+1+1 contract.

Alongside this, approval is sought for a further £72k to fund the remainder of the Christmas lights programme for 2022. Corporate Finance note that the contract price and the additional £72k can be met from existing budgets within the service budget supported by a drawdown of £90k from specific funds earmarked for this purpose and the £10k expected partner contributions.

Legal

Legal Services confirm that there are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

Infrastructure / Asset Management

None

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL