

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

10 APRIL 2017

ANNUAL INSTALLATION OF CHRISTMAS LIGHTING

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

As members will be aware, Wisbech Town Council uses the services of two appropriate contractors to install (and remove) the town's Christmas lighting each year.

One of the contractors (which installed the new infrastructure in 2015 and 2016 for the new lighting scheme), based in Norwich, installs the lighting in the Market Place, High Street, the entrance points to the Market Place, Post Office Lane, Hill Street, Freedom Bridge roundabout, Town Bridge and the Town Hall.

The other contractor, based in Wisbech, installs (and removes) the lighting which is supported by scaffolding poles alongside the river and at the gardens of St Peter and St Paul's Church.

All of the lighting and the associated infrastructure is owned and stored by Wisbech Town Council.

CURRENT POSITION

The contractor which installs (and removes) the lighting which is supported by scaffolding poles alongside the river and at the gardens of St Peter and St Paul's Church has approached the Clerk, via the council's Assets Manager, with a proposal which would enable the contractor to reduce the cost of the work and, consequently, reduce the cost to the council of that contract.

The cost to Wisbech Town Council for that contract in 2016/17 was £4,300.00.

The proposal would involve the council making a one-off capital investment which would result in an ongoing reduction in revenue expenditure.

PROPOSAL

The local contractor has calculated that through the use of scaffolding poles manufactured from aluminium, instead of using those currently owned by the council (manufactured from steel), the amount of labour and plant required to manoeuvre the poles (because of the significantly lower weight of aluminium poles) is less and this would, consequently, allow changes to the contractor's working practices; such changes would result in a reduction in cost (as well as providing an improved health and safety situation for those individuals who are undertaking the installation/removal work). The cost savings realised by the contractor would be passed on, through a reduction in contract price, to Wisbech Town Council.

BUSINESS CASE

The cost of purchasing the required number of aluminium scaffolding poles is £5,094.00. The estimated income to the council from the sale of the current stock of steel poles is a minimum of £2,000.00 (such a sale could possibly achieve £2,400.00).

With regard to storage of the lighter (in weight) poles, it would be necessary to modify the “cradle” in which the current poles are stored by the council, at a cost of £350.00.

This means that Wisbech Town Council would need to invest, as a maximum, a net capital sum of £3,444.00 (it could be lower if a sale price of more than £2,000.00 were to be achieved for the council’s stock of steel poles).

The annual cost of the Christmas lighting installation contract would reduce (mainly as a result of being able to reduce labour costs) from its 2016/17 figure of £4,300.00 to £3,300.00 per annum with effect from 2017/18. This means that the council would recover its capital investment in approximately three years and then make savings in revenue expenditure of £1,000 per annum each year thereafter.

RECOMMENDATION

It is RECOMMENDED that members consider the proposal and decide whether or not it is something that they wish to pursue.

Report author: Terry Jordan, Clerk to Wisbech Town Council