

**COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**20 SEPTEMBER 2017**  
**PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

**Sedgefield Village Action Group**

Do the Council consider the Energy Reduction Policy which is resulting in the removal of street lighting from some 'vulnerable' areas to be fit for purpose. The consultation on this policy in 2012 is questionable as very few people were aware of the opportunity to comment on proposals. This is reflected by only 255 responses from the whole County; if people had known of the impact of the proposals to remove lights we are sure there would have been a much greater response.

Energy reduction is supported, but the main problem with the policy is that it does not give any consideration to pedestrian's safety; we are informed by County Officers there is no provision in the policy to address pedestrian safety even when it is identified as an issue in particular areas. This results in potentially very dangerous situations on routes used by pedestrian, cyclist and children; going to and from school is particularly hazardous for children in winter months. We are aware that DCC have given local town and parish councils the opportunity to retain lighting if they pay for it – very few smaller councils can afford to do this. We look to DCC to ensure vulnerable areas are covered by lighting.

It does seem that lighting may be re-instated, as desired by residents, between Sedgefield and Fishburn but only as a result of a developer paying through S106 monies; if the developer had not been granted permission at appeal presumably there would be no lighting on this much-used pedestrian route. We find this totally unacceptable and expect our County Council to light vulnerable areas. Other areas remain at risk of having lighting removed.

Surely this issue comes within the 'Altogether Safer' priority theme.  
Will the Council reconsider these issues as a matter of urgency?

## **Response**

The Street Lighting Energy Reduction Project is only removing street lights that are not required by the Council's Street Lighting Policy where it is safe to do so. This is based on a risk assessment which is undertaken by an independent road safety auditor and the risk assessment is shared with local Elected Members, Town and Parish Councils to ensure that it is accurate. The risk assessment takes account of all road safety factors including pedestrian safety.

No street lights are being removed in residential areas, roundabouts, major junctions or where there are proven road safety and crime issues. Where third parties including Town and Parish Councils wish to retain street lights we are facilitating this by offering service level agreements.

The project is achieving significant savings in energy and maintenance costs that are being used to help meet the unprecedented reductions in central government funding.

The Street Lighting Policy which facilitates these removals was approved by the Council's Cabinet on 20 November 2013 following extensive public consultation. This involved inviting feedback from the public, Area Action Partnerships, Town and Parish Councils, the Disability Partnership and 3 focus groups. The policy aligns the provision of street lighting in County Durham with British Standards in line with most other Councils in the United Kingdom and therefore we are content that it is fit for purpose."