

**Improving People's Lives**

**To: All Members of the Parish Liaison Meeting**

Chief Executive and other appropriate officers  
Press and Public

Dear Member

**Parish Liaison Meeting: Wednesday, 24th March, 2021**

Please find attached a **SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA DESPATCH** of late papers which were not available at the time the agenda was published. Please treat these papers as part of the agenda.

Papers have been included for the following items:

**UPDATE ON STREET LIGHTING CONTRACT IN PARISHES**

Yours sincerely

Marie Todd  
for Chief Executive

**If you need to access this agenda or any of the supporting reports in an alternative accessible format please contact Democratic Services or the relevant report author whose details are listed at the end of each report.**

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## **SOUTH STOKE PARISH COUNCIL**

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Tuesday, 23 March 2021

### **Update on street lighting contracts in Parishes – B&NES Parishes Liaison Meeting March 24<sup>th</sup> 2021**

#### **Background**

20 Parishes in B&NES find themselves with ownership and maintenance responsibility for Street Lights. The total number of lights is 360, and ranges from 120 in Peasedown St. John to just 1 in Swainswick and 1 in Farmborough. The average number is 18, but only four Parishes have more than this, Hinton Charterhouse 20, Freshford 40, Chew Magna 52, and Peasedown 120.

It appears to be quite common for Parishes in various District Authorities to have Street Lights, but on the whole we do not know how this came to be. There are many other Districts and Parishes where this is not the case.

Until March 31<sup>st</sup> 2020 the B&NES Parishes Street Lights were maintained by SSE Contracting. In the latter part of 2019 SSE were attempting to negotiate new contracts with each Parish. However, none of the Parishes could locate any previous contract with them, and the pricing had not changed in many years, if at all.

At this time B&NES Council were retendering their Highways Maintenance Contracts, which included Street Lighting, these having been held with SSE. The contract was awarded to Volker Highways, and in consequence SSE Contracting withdrew from the area and from their contract negotiations with the Parishes.

This left the Parishes with no Street lighting Maintenance from April 1<sup>st</sup> 2020.

#### **The present**

Parishes sought alternative provision but for most, in a similar position to South Stoke with only 8 lights, suppliers (Weston Rail, CentreGreat) have very little interest in such a small contract, and it was agreed that the B&NES Parishes would attempt to find a supplier as a collective.

B&NES Highways Officers liaised with Volker Highways and Volker agreed to provide Re-Active Maintenance for any of the Parishes with failed Street Lighting, and they also agreed to discuss provision of a Planned Maintenance service.

All of this coincided with the CoronaVirus Lockdown measures so a particularly difficult time for all concerned to engage in such negotiations.

Volker Highways provided labour and material rates for the Reactive Maintenance and Parishes have been raising Purchase Orders to Volker Highways and obtaining Reactive Maintenance in very timely and cost effective responses.

Volker Highways then also provided a Tender Offer, Labour & Plant and Materials Rates and Volker Highways Standard Terms for the Planned Maintenance. We believe these are the same as those used for B&NES Council.

These have been accepted by the Parishes and we are using them to procure Planned Maintenance for 2021-22.

South Stoke Parish Council approved a budget in January for these costs in 2021-22, have submitted a Purchase Order to Volker Highways for Planned Maintenance for all our Street Lights, and this has been accepted, confirmed and scheduled by Volker Highways.

I anticipate that other Parishes have done, or are planning to do likewise.

### **Going Forward**

This arrangement with Volker Highways is how they manage Parishes in other District Authorities where Parishes Street Lighting occurs.

It is not the arrangement we thought we had with SSE where the contractor managed the lights. However, there is some doubt about how much management actually occurred under SSE.

The Volker Highways arrangement does require a Parish (i.e. in most cases the clerk) to manage their own Planned Maintenance. For some new or inexperienced clerks this could prove quite demanding.

So far, because of the CoronaVirus restrictions and impacts, we have not been able to even address, let alone agree Conditions of Contract, and so Parishes, from a public accountability perspective, cannot show they actually have any Street Lighting Maintenance provision in place.

For Volker, like other suppliers, making such an agreement with 20 separate Parishes is likely to be problematic, and a single over-arching agreement preferred. However, this latter option is problematic for the Parishes individually as there is no single organisation. That can make this agreement.

Perhaps, therefore the way forward is for the above arrangements presently established, to be added to the B&NES Council's contract with Volker Highways, so that there is a clear framework under which the Parishes can raise Purchase Orders on Volker Highways for their Maintenance needs. Such a framework would also have the potential of some support for a Parish where it might lack the experience and expertise to plan and prepare such orders. A final benefit of such a framework would be that when B&NES Council next re-tender for such services, provision for Parishes would not be overlooked.

Geoff Davis  
Clerk - South Stoke Parish Council