

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services

Community Safety and Environmental Services Committee : 3 May 2006

Subject: Provision of Festive Lighting in West Dunbartonshire

1. Purpose

- 1.1** To seek approval from Committee to review how festive lighting is procured and funded in future.

2. Background

- 2.1** During the late 1990's, festive lighting provision was focussed on Dumbarton High Street and was funded by the Dumbarton Common Good fund. Since then additional features have been added to Dumbarton and a full installation added to Alexandria, with Christmas trees now provided at various locations in our smaller communities. Installation of festive lighting was originally managed by the Council's street lighting section, with installation carried out by the Council's direct labour organisation with assistance from private contractors as and when required.
- 2.2** Since 2000, the installation works have been subject to competitive tender and private contractors have carried out the work.
- 2.3** In 2003, the Town Centres Initiative (TCI), took over the management and administration of the installation contract, but were not provided with direct access to funding, which has remained under the control of the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services.
- 2.4** In recent years, the extent of lighting has increased considerably in Dumbarton and Alexandria, and in 2004 the Town Centres Initiative replaced most of the old festive lighting. At this time wall brackets, columns and fixings were inspected and improved.
- 2.5** During 2005, lighting in Clydebank (funded by Clydebank Rebuilt) was added to the installation contract and it is anticipated that this work will increase as new developments continue.
- 2.6** The cost of festive lighting in Dumbarton and Alexandria in 2005 was £30,000.

3. Main issues

- 3.1** Historically, the provision and erection of the festive lighting and Christmas trees was funded mainly from the Common Good fund, but as the extent of lighting has increased, additional funding has been required. To date the Street Lighting and Grounds Maintenance revenue budget have been utilised to fund this work.
- 3.2** The demand from our communities for festive lighting is growing and the requirement for replacement is becoming more onerous. In recent years the previous Housing and Technical Services effectively underwrote the costs of the work with Common Good funding falling well behind actual total costs.
- 3.3** Presently there is not one organisation with overall responsibility for the management and funding of festive lighting. Although the TCI took over procurement and installation in 2004, all funding has to date still been directed through the previous Housing and Technical Services.

4. Personnel Issues

- 4.1** There are no personnel issues

5. Financial implications

- 5.1** In 2005, the contribution from the Common Good Fund was £12,600 with Housing and Technical Services providing the remaining funding from Grounds Maintenance and Street Lighting revenue accounts.
- 5.2** It is proposed that for 2006 funding will come from the Common Good Fund, departmental revenue budgets, and any remaining funds from the Town Centre Management and Marketing budget.
- 5.3** There are potentially other forms of funding available (e.g. sponsorship by retailers) for festive lighting and these should be explored before the 2006 work begins. However, it is unlikely that such funding sources could be in place for the winter of 2006/2007.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1** The costs of festive lighting are increasing annually and the Common Good contribution now falls well short of covering the costs of the Dumbarton Lighting. The Alexandria lighting has no allocated budget and is currently funded from street lighting revenue budget. A contribution from the Grounds maintenance budget is also used to help to fund Dumbarton and Alexandria. The Clydebank festive lighting is funded in full by Clydebank Rebuilt. There is therefore a requirement to increase the funding available from either Common Good or other source to the value of £18,000 per year if the current level of provision is to be maintained.

6.2 In the absence of the Town Centres Initiative, there is a need to hand over the management of the festive lighting to another body. Responsibility for managing the installation, marketing and public events should rest with the Events & Halls Section.

7. Recommendations

7.1 The Committee is invited to:-

- (a) approve the proposal to fund festive lighting from 2006 onwards from the Common Good Fund, departmental revenue budgets, and any remaining funds from the Town Centre Management and Marketing budget; and**
- (b) note the proposal for all aspects of procurement, installation and management of the festive lighting to be undertaken by the Events & Halls Section.**

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Date: 19 April 2006

Wards Affected: 2, 15, 17, 18

Background Papers: None

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