

CHRISTMAS SUB COMMITTEE REPORT

Date: Thursday 27th February
Title: Future Options for Witney's Christmas Lights Display.
Contact Officer: Operations and Estates Officer – John Hickman

BACKGROUND

Councillors are aware the current Christmas Lights display contract was terminated on 31 December 2019.

CURRENT POSITION

Officers are preparing to draw up the new tender specification for the future provision of the Town's Christmas Lights display and requires direction from Council as to what areas they would wish covered in the displays.

Councillors should be aware that in recent years requests have been made to Council by businesses to extend the display further down the High Street to the Bridge, with one company offering to sponsor lighting in their location on the High Street side of the Bridge.

The location of all the items in the current display have been provided on a separate sheet.

Officers would request Councillors give direction on specifications for the new Christmas Lights Display to guide companies tendering for the contract.

Items to consider

1. Solar Lights these have been tried previously attached to LP's they were ineffectual Council received many complaints regarding these trees.
2. Town Centre Tree, keep, improve, replace/artificial or statement piece.
3. Large Christmas tree or statement piece to front of Corn Exchange in Existing socket?
4. Extending current display further down the High Street current display is limited to 6 LP Motifs and 1 x Wall motif between Welch Way and the Bridge. Additional lighting on the lower High Street may require additional LP connections cost per additional connection installed approx. £750 per connection.
5. Possible installation of timing devices to all LP connections.
6. Not installing LP column motifs especially close to trees as many ineffectual due to surrounding trees.
7. Continued display in trees to Town Centre and Corn St, Welch way.

8. Continued use of Icicle lights to buildings? covers large areas at reasonable cost.
9. Improve Church Green Display current display is very limited, possible move from light harnesses to lights in trees.
10. Inclusion of Penalty Charges in Contract.
11. Total annual budget for display. Including a contingency fund and a further sum for provision of infrastructure works during the term of the contract. Previous initial tender sums were £25k annual budget however further sums were added to this during the contract for extensions to the initial display. £5k Contingency per annum. £8k for infrastructure works during the time of the contract.
12. Any other suggestions councillors may have regarding the display.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency at its Council meeting on 26 June 2019 – with this in mind Councillors should have due regard to the environmental impact of any decisions they make with regard to its facilities and services it operates. Council should consider the environmental impact of the consumption of power used by the display but also the associated environmental impact of the installation un-install annually, production of the display, felling of the Christmas tree, disposal of the lights display at end of life.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The final invoice for the contract was for a total of £28,731.25 ex VAT. WTC reduced this sum by the amount agreed by council for penalty clauses and missing products resulting in a payment of £17,181.18 incl. VAT.

The current years budget was £35,000. The budget agreed for 2020/21 is £40,000.

RISK

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability. Companies will be expected to abide by County Surveyors Society Code of Practice.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Member are invited to note the report and consider the detail for tendering the Christmas lights contract as listed 1-12 above in order to direct Officers.