

AWARD: PUBLIC SECTOR COMMITMENT TO CARBON REDUCTION

Buckinghamshire County Council



'The decision to switch off street lights at selected locations across the County.'



Notable Features

287 streetlights, on seven selected rural and semi-rural sites throughout the county, are being replaced with ecologically-friendly alternatives. This is the first phase of a groundbreaking trial, thought to be the first of its kind in the country

Setting the scene

Increased awareness of environmental issues has inspired us to pioneer creative and innovative ways of replacing streetlights. Street lights will be switched off for a period of three years. During this time, the street lights will remain in place but will not be lit during darkness. After three years, a decision will be made on the effectiveness of the trial and at that time the lights will either be removed or switched on again. The street lights at the seven sites that form Phase 1 were switched off in August 2007. The sites that form Phase 2 will be switched off from April 2008. Wholly residential areas are not being considered as part of the trial and generally any areas subject to a 30mph or 40mph speed limit will not be considered as part of the trial either.

Reaping the benefits

Street light energy usage has risen by 13% since 2003/04. Switching off the 287 lights involved in the first phase of the trial will save an estimated 90 tonnes of CO₂. Once the first phase of the three-year trial is up and running, a wider programme of switching off a further 1700 streetlights will be rolled out, with an ultimate saving of 590 tonnes of CO₂ per year.

Beating the odds

Turning off street lighting has obvious complications and is bound to meet some resistance. The decision was undertaken through consultation with the police and the Highways Agency, and measures will be taken to monitor the affected areas throughout the project. At all potential sites where switching off of street lights is being considered, a number of factors are being considered and taken into account, including:

- Collision history – including an examination of collision types, number occurring during darkness and other contributory factors;
- Community safety issues – highlighting those areas or premises that may generate pedestrian or vehicle activity particularly during darkness;
- Accessibility issues – highlighting where facilities for public transport, pedestrians or cyclists have been provided or are being promoted;
- Review of existing signing, road markings, road studs and other physical features such as visibility, any overgrown foliage etc.

Contact details

Zoe Dixon
Environmental Coordinator
Buckinghamshire County Council
8th Floor
County Hall
Walton Street
Aylesbury
HP20 1UY
Tel: 01296 383710
zoe.dixon@buckscc.gov.uk

Award sponsored by:



Awards organised by:



GOVERNMENT OFFICE
FOR THE SOUTH EAST