

Report to: Council

Date: 19 July 2022

Executive Member: Councillor Vimal Choksi – Executive Member Town Centres and Communities

Reporting Officer: Nick Fenwick, Interim Director of Place

Subject: **CHRISTMAS LIGHTING SCHEME**

Report Summary: The Council supports 8 Tameside Christmas Light Switch Ons annually. The ninth event combines the annual lantern parade with a traditional switch on. In 2019 additional budget of £70,000 was agreed to support a civic lighting scheme, which ensured that 7 civic buildings were lit as part of the switch on. However, with an increased focus on town centre regeneration and a focus on welcoming people back into town centres throughout the festive period this report proposes that additional funding is identified to enhance the lighting schemes in 2 Towns: Ashton and Hyde to encourage a higher footfall and increased activity in the town centres resulting in increased economic activity for businesses and traders.

Recommendations: It is recommended that:

- (i) The additional plans and budget of £40,000 for an enhanced festive lighting in Ashton and Hyde is approved.
- (ii) The budget will be allocated via the Council's business rates 100% retention benefit reserve.
- (iii) Taking into account the necessary lead in time to obtain Christmas lights and the inability to acquire the necessary lighting units from suppliers for this year that an appropriate review of Christmas lights across the Borough and all towns will be undertaken for consideration by members with an appropriate capital budget bid in 2022/23.

Corporate Plan: Tameside's Christmas switch on events and festive lighting scheme significantly adds to the borough's communities sense of pride, our place and shared heritage.

Policy Implications: It is essential that any proposals demonstrate value for money and make a clear contribution to Council priorities.

Where possible the events and associated plans will take the Council's Environmental strategy into account through recycling, restricted use of plastic and impact on the environment is considered for each event.

Financial Implications:
(Authorised by the statutory Section 151 Officer & Chief Finance Officer)

The report sets out proposals for enhanced Christmas lighting in Ashton and Hyde.

The cost of replacing lamp columns together with the purchasing and installation of the illuminated plaques is £40,000. The related cost will be financed via Council reserves. The funding will be allocated via the business rates 100% retention benefit reserve as this resource is assigned to support initiatives that contribute

towards the recovery of the borough's economy as referenced in section 2.3 of the report.

It is essential that the lamp columns and illuminated plaques are procured in accordance with the Council's financial regulations and procedures with the provision of related advice via STAR where appropriate and that value for money is clearly evidenced.

**Legal Implications
(Authorised by the
Borough Solicitor)**

In delivering its priorities the Council must deliver a balanced budget and achieve value for money.

Risk Management:

A decision regarding the installation of new lights in Ashton and Hyde needs to be made within the next 2 weeks in order for the lights and works to be carried out by the 19 November which is the date of the lantern parade which launches the festive season. Delaying a decision to fund the lights would mean that the lights would not be ready for the festive season in 2022. This is based on current information from suppliers but does not guarantee they can be delivered.

Access to Information:

There are no exemptions for access

Background Information:

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting Marie Holland, Arts and Engagement Manager



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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This proposal is to enhance the Christmas experience in Hyde and Ashton Town Centres. It is proposed to do this with additional festoon lighting attached to lamp columns to brighten and create an inviting approach to these town centres. It is proposed that these enhancements are funded from a specific business retention reserve.

2. PROPOSAL

Tameside Winter Lantern Parade

- 2.1 Tameside Lantern Parade will be staged in Ashton on the 19 November 2022 and this will mark the time at which the Ashton Christmas tree is lit.

Town Christmas Switch On events

- 2.2 Town Christmas Switch On events are a unique and festive feature of the Christmas programme in Tameside. Each town has its own tradition for the event and are organised by Town Teams, community groups and elected members and kick-starts the festive season.

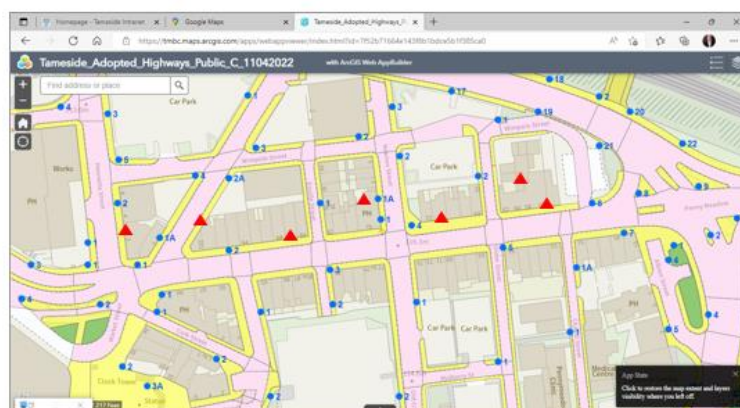
- 2.3 The programme of Christmas activities from the corporate Tameside Winter Lantern Parade to the town based switch ons are significant and key events annually. They mark the point at which the festive lights are switched on. These lights combined with the festive lights on key civic buildings provide a cheerful and bright backdrop in Tameside's town centres and for town teams and communities to come together and develop more events and activities which attract shoppers and residents into town centres thereby supporting businesses and traders.

- 2.4 The dates for the events are:

- Ashton (Tameside corporate Christmas event) 19 November 2022
- Hyde 26 November 2022

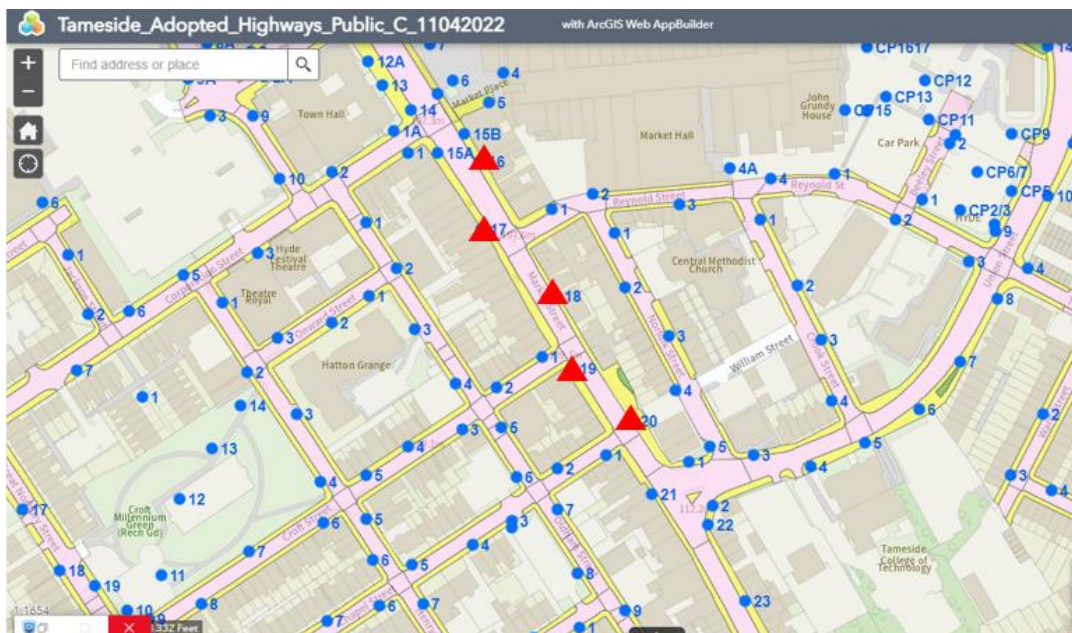
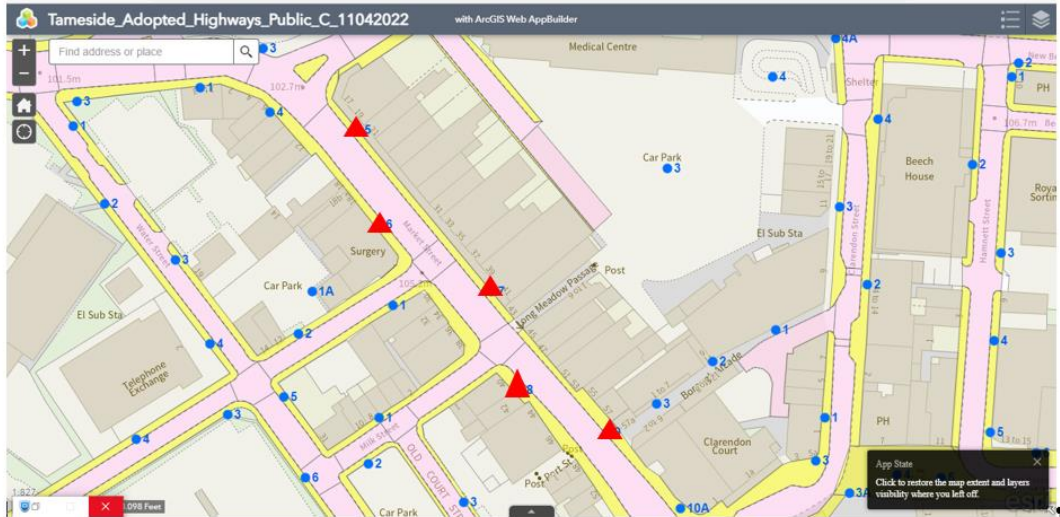
- 2.5 The lamp columns in the town centres are not all suitable for the LED illuminated plaques affixed to the lamp columns due to their age and the specifications of the low energy LED. The cost of replacing the lamp columns, purchasing the lights and their installation is £40,000. The related cost will be financed via Council reserves. The funding will be allocated via the business rates 100% retention benefit reserve as this resource is assigned to support initiatives that contribute towards the recovery of the borough's economy as referenced in section 2.3.

- 2.6 For Ashton, this would mean illuminating sections of Penny Meadow with 7 new columns and 7 plaques.



Penny meadow column locations ▲

2.7 In Hyde it would mean illuminating key sections of Market Street around the town hall and within the market square with 10 new columns and 16 new plaques.



3. PLAQUES

3.1 The plaques to be ordered are shown as follows:



4. RECOMMENDATION

4.1 As set out at the front of the report.