

ENVIRONMENTAL AND PLANNING REVIEW COMMITTEE

MONDAY 16TH MARCH 2009

REPORT OF THE CITY SOLICITOR

PROJECT UPDATE: STREET LIGHTING AND HIGHWAY SIGNS PFI CONTRACT

**Strategic Priorities: Attractive and Inclusive City and Prosperous City
Corporate Performance Objectives CI01**

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report is to inform the Committee of the ongoing progress with the Street Lighting and Highway Signs PFI Contract, which is being delivered by Sunderland Streetlighting Limited, operating under the name of Aurora, on behalf of the Council.
- 1.2 The following information has been supplied by Aurora which sets out the current position in relation to the Core Investment Programme, the Annual Works Programme and Maintenance and Communication and Customer Satisfaction.
- 1.3 A representative from Aurora will be in attendance to answer any questions raised by members.

2.0 Current Position - Core Investment Programme (CIP)

- 2.1 As the Committee is aware, the CIP relates to the lighting column replacement programme, totalling some 31,120 columns to be replaced across the whole City. Since the last update to this Committee, the CIP was completed in August 2008, which was in line with the timeframes of the Contract.
- 2.2 In total nearly 32,000 new columns have been installed for the 31,120 that were removed. The difference in numbers being due to the upgrading of lighting standards in many areas, and the provision of lighting to previously unlit back lanes.
- 2.3 New highway signs have also been installed as part of the CIP works, with nearly 5,000 new signs being installed during the period of the CIP.
- 2.4 In October 2005, Aurora was awarded a good Lighting Award from the British Astronomical Association in recognition of the efforts made to reduce light pollution. This was followed up with a further award in March 2008 for the floodlighting that was installed on the Queen Alexandra Bridge.

3.0 Annual Works Programme and Maintenance

- 3.1 As the Contract has now moved into year 6 of 25, it becomes more like a traditional term maintenance type Contract. This involves Aurora being responsible for the ongoing maintenance of street lighting and highway signs throughout the City.
- 3.2 The graphs attached in Appendix 1, show the number of reported faults received by Aurora since service commencement in September 2003. With 5 years of data, and

the large capital investment, the effect of bulk changing / cleaning against the former regime of burn to extinction are self evident. The second graph also shows that at any one time, more lights are working as planned, compared to 5 years ago.

- 3.3 The response to lighting faults which relate to the cabling that is the responsibility of Northern Electric Distribution Ltd (NEDL) is still of concern despite significant improvement . During the last 2 years, the performance of NEDL has improved, but the average response time to repair such faults is significantly greater than the five days that Aurora have within the Contract. To minimise disruption and the time the light is out, Aurora have adopted a process whereby if they know NEDL will not attend within the set timeframe, where possible they will install overhead cables to get the light working again. This approach limits the financial penalties that Aurora could face within the terms of the Contract.
- 3.4 Members will be aware that energy prices have continued to increase over the 5 years of the CIP, and this has led to a significant increase in the Council's energy bill for street lighting and illuminated signs. To try and mitigate this increase in energy, the Council has asked Aurora to review those areas where energy savings can be made. This work is ongoing presently, and will be presented to the Council for consideration in April 2009.

4.0 Communication and Customer Satisfaction

- 4.1 The table in Appendix 2 shows how the satisfaction with street lighting has changed pre contract and during the CIP phase of the Contract. During the 5 year CIP, on average 84% of those surveyed are satisfied with the service. This represents a 7% rise when compared to 2003. The figure for those dissatisfied has also improved, with a reduction being seen for each year of the CIP. This clearly shows that the investment in the last 5 years, is delivering the expected improvements to the people of Sunderland.

5.0 Innovation

- 5.1 As part of the CIP, lighting has been provided to the previously unlit Sunderland Highway (A1231) and to the remaining unlit section of the Washington Highway (A182). In line with technical guidelines for high speed roads, an assessment was carried out on both of these roads, with the outcome being that passively safe lighting columns should be installed. These are columns which collapse if they are damaged in an accident, such as an impact or collision with a vehicle. The result is that the driver has a much higher probability of surviving and not being seriously injured. A number of columns have already been damaged, with the drivers requiring little or no medical intervention. As a project, over 750 passively safe columns have been installed on both roads, and this currently represents the largest such project in the Country.
- 5.2 As the project moves into year 6, Aurora have been asked to submit an "Innovations" report, of those areas where efficiencies can be made or energy consumption can be reduced, due to technical advances in the last 5 years. This report will be submitted by Aurora during April 2009.

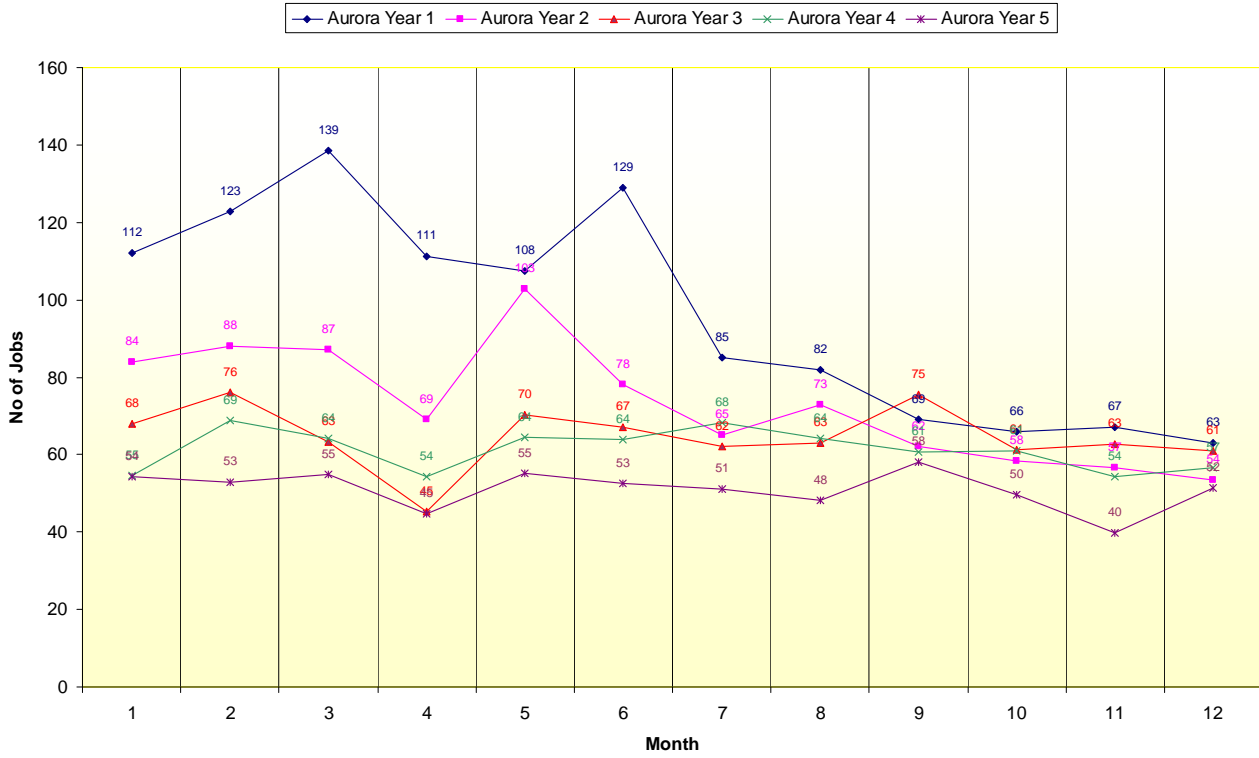
6.0 Recommendations

- 6.1 The Committee is recommended to note the contents of this report.

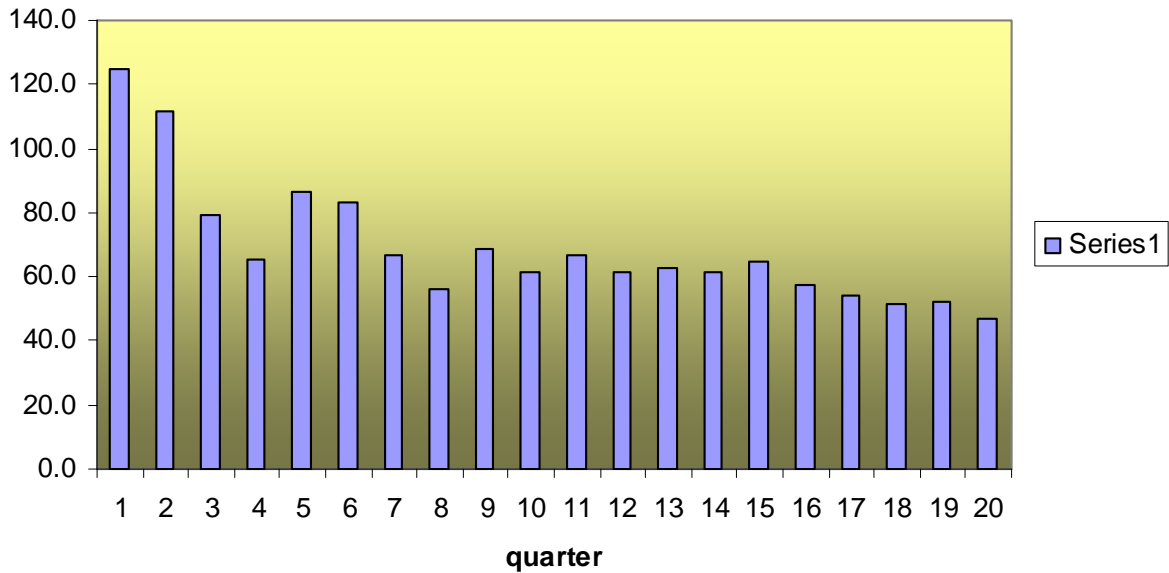
APPENDIX 1

Faults by volume

Average No of Jobs Raised per Day



average daily jobs raised by quarter

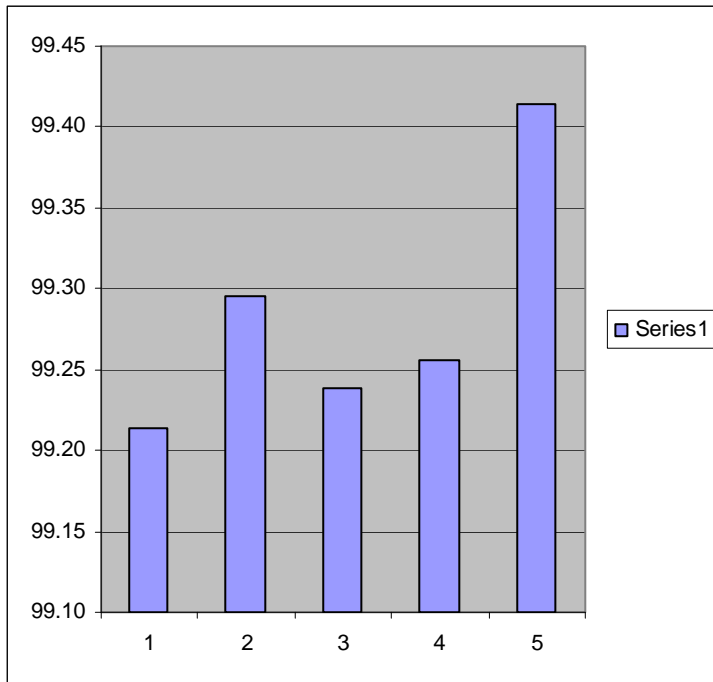


APPENDIX 1

Percentage of lights & signs working as planned

Percentage of lighting points and illuminated highway signs lit during hours of operation

	sept	oct	nov	dec	jan	feb	mar	apr	may	jun	jul	aug	total	ave
2003/4	99.98	98.64			98.89	98.83	99.16	99.33	99.35	99.38	99.36		892.92	99.21
2004/5	99.1	99.1	99.08	99.29	98.98	99.35	99.34	99.33	99.46	99.47	99.52	99.52	1191.54	99.30
2005/6	99.09	99.09	99.2	99.46	99.15	99.22	99.22	99.38	99.21	99.3	99.28	99.26	1190.86	99.24
2006/7	99.35	99.17	99.21	99.18	99.18	99.3	99.14	99.23	99.31	99.32	99.38	99.3	1191.07	99.26
2007/8	99.39	99.32	99.33	99.52	99.29	99.41	99.39	99.42	99.41	99.48	99.55	99.46	1192.97	99.41



APPENDIX 2

Summary of Mori Satisfaction Results 1999-2008

Satisfaction with street lighting – Trends										
	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
<i>Base: c. 1,260 Sunderland residents, 1999-2008</i>	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Satisfied	78	77	76	77	77	77	82	88	85	88
Very satisfied	23	17	17	18	21	23	31	42	41	41
Fairly satisfied	55	60	59	59	56	54	52	46	44	46
Fairly dissatisfied	11	10	11	10	11	10	8	5	6	4
Very dissatisfied	6	5	5	5	6	6	5	3	3	2
Dissatisfied	17	15	16	15	17	16	12	8	9	6

Source: Ipsos MORI
