EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

To consider Surrey County Council’s Street Lighting Replacement Programme, the options that the Programme presents for improvement opportunities in the Borough’s District Centres, and the implications for existing historic lighting in Conservation Areas.

RECOMMENDATION: THAT

(A) ON THE BASIS OF AN ALLOCATION OF £30,000 FOR EACH DISTRICT CENTRE, A TOTAL OF £150,000 FUNDING IS MADE AVAILABLE FROM THE COUNCIL’S ELMBRIDGE CIVIC IMPROVEMENT FUND (ECIF) TO ENABLE ENHANCED STREET LIGHTING TO BE PROVIDED IN THE DISTRICT CENTRES OF COBHAM, Esher, EAST MOLESEY, HERSHAM AND WEYBRIDGE; AND

(B) SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL BE ASKED TO ADOPT A MORE ENVIRONMENTALLY SYMPATHETIC ATTITUDE TO THE REPLACEMENT OF HISTORIC STREET LIGHTING WITHIN CONSERVATION AREAS WITH NON STANDARD APPARATUS, POTENTIALLY FUNDED FROM SECTION 106 TARIFF FUNDING SECURED BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL.

REPORT:

1. Surrey County Council have entered into a 25-year contract with Skanska, who will operate as Surrey Lighting Services, to upgrade and subsequently maintain the 89,000 street lights in the County. This is mainly funded through a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) with a contract value of £83 million and will mean that county-wide 70,000 street lights will be replaced with new columns and lights. The remaining 19,000 more modern columns will be retained but with new lights. The first phase of the contract began in 2010 in Guildford, Reigate and Banstead and Spelthorne. The series of 18-month long phases operate on a street-by-street basis with the second phase starting in Elmbridge, Waverley and Tandridge in May 2011. Further information on the project can be found in the street lighting replacement programme pages of the County Council’s web site at www.surreycc.gov.uk which includes a Frequently Asked Questions section.
2. The County have confirmed that generally lighting columns will be replaced on a one for one basis and in the same location using modern style columns and more efficient lights. The design of the new columns and lanterns will be of a standard form as shown in Appendix A and in many areas this has been seen as a positive improvement.

3. There is however an opportunity for Districts to provide additional funds as “top up” payments and choose from the six further design options to upgrade the standard design. These non-standard options range in cost from £732 to £2,270 depending on design and column height. Members will be aware that Walton High Street has already benefited from the “Soul to the Street” project which, in addition to environmental improvements, has included the replacement of its streetlights with such a non-standard design that also allow for the display of banners. It has largely been financed by the Council’s Elmbridge Civic Improvement Fund (ECIF). The opportunity could be taken, as part of the County Council’s programme, to fund similar enhanced street lighting in the Borough’s five District Centres (Cobham, East Molesey, Esher, Hersham and Weybridge) using ECIF funding. The facility for banner displays could be included. Upgrading fifteen 10 metre tall columns in each District Centre would require a total budget allocation of £150,000 from ECIF.

4. The County Council have confirmed that within Conservation Areas it intends to proceed on the same basis and replace existing columns with a standard column and lantern. This may be entirely appropriate in some areas but Members will be aware that a number of traditional swan necked lights, which are either the original converted gas lamps or replacements, are to be found within the Borough and in some of the Conservation Areas. Examples of these are shown in Appendix B. These street lights have been highlighted as adding to the special historic character in most of the community based Conservation Area Appraisals undertaken by the Town Planning Division. Local residents place a high heritage and amenity value on these and it is anticipated that there will be adverse reaction and publicity if Surrey County Council proceed to replace them with standard columns and lights. The County Council are undertaking a survey of all lighting types within Conservation Areas to establish which are considered to be of significant historic merit and which will be replaced with non-standard designs as part of their programme. This survey has not yet been completed but it is understood that very restricted criteria are being used to the extent that to date only 3 columns have been identified by the County Council as having historic quality and merit within the whole Borough.

5. Officers have held a number of discussions with the County Council about the need for the retention and/or sympathetic replacement of these swan necked lights. The current position is that the County Council intend to replace them with the standard design and have allocated no funds to restore or replicate these columns. Without comprehensive survey information from the County it is difficult to assess the number of these columns existing in the Borough and therefore the financial implications of upgrading them with special non-standard designs. Many of the 24 Conservation Areas would not be affected by the scheme, either because they are private estates, such as Whiteley
Village, or have modern or a mixture of lighting such as Brooklands and Hersham. However some of the smaller and older residential areas such as the Foley Estate in Claygate, parts of East Molesey and The Tilt in Cobham, where there are a number of original and replacement swan necked columns, would without doubt be adversely affected by the use of standard design columns and lights. Whilst recognising the problem, it is understood that to date no District has opted to fund the upgrade of such lights within their Conservation Areas.

6. Whilst the Council could consider providing additional “top up” monies to fund non-standard designs where appropriate within Conservation Areas, the extent of the works and hence the level of expenditure involved is, as previously mentioned, currently unclear. In contrast with the lighting improvements within town centres discussed earlier in this report, it is not considered that the use of ECIF funding would be appropriate since this is clearly an environmental/townscape issue rather than an economic development initiative.

7. At present the County Council appear to be approaching this rather as an engineering project with any issues relating to the appearance of the new street lighting and their impact on the streetscene being largely a matter for Districts. Members may agree that it is not just the Districts that have responsibility for the protection of the appearance of the County and that this is shared by the County Council. In this context, in the period since the introduction of tariff based planning contributions in the Borough in 2008 up to 31 December 2010 a total of £1,766,252 of contributions has been passed to the County Council from Elmbridge. Whilst a significant proportion was secured to assist education and library provision, in excess of £568,000 was secured for transport purposes. This might be a source of funding for the installation of special non-standard forms of street lighting by the County Council in those instances where this is necessary in order to protect the character of Conservation Areas.

Financial implications:
As set out in the report

Environmental implications:
As set out in the report

Legal implications:
None

Equality implications:
None

Risk Management implications:
None

Community Safety implications:
One of the objectives of the street lighting upgrade programme is to improve lighting
standards and thus improve public safety.

**Background papers:**
Held by the Town Planning Division

**Enclosures/Appendices:**
Appendix A – Arc and Iridium Street Lights
Appendix B – Older Swan necked columns and more modern replacements

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Arc and Iridium street lamp types [Extract from Surrey County Council’s PFI website]

What is the equipment that is being used?

The majority of areas throughout the county will have a standardised design. There are two types of lamp (luminaire): Arc for major traffic routes and Iridium for roads that are primarily considered to be residential.

The height of the columns will be dependent on the existing height in a given street and wherever possible (subject to appropriate lighting regulations) they will be replaced on a like for like height.

In areas where specially designed columns and lamps are in use (for example some conservation areas and town centres), there will be an option to select a design from a selection of approved lights and columns.
Example of original and replacement Swan Necked columns found within the Borough.