



How the colour of our street lights could be improved

Shining a colourful light

The humble grey lamppost is set to get a dazzling new lease of life in Birmingham, with communities being invited to pick their own colours.

The dull grey poles can now be replaced with red, greens, blues and blacks or even, at extra cost, a different colour.

The Irish Quarter in Digbeth could go for green, while Caribbean communities in Handsworth might favour a green, yellow and red motif.

Each lamppost will have a band of contrasting colour, usually yellow, to help the partially sighted, so colour combinations are possible.

So the streets around Villa Park

may soon be lined with claret and sky blue lights and the Royal Blue and white of Birmingham City may be dotted along the roads around St Andrew's.

More subtly, people in a parkside street of leafy avenue could sign up for green, so the lights don't stand out or a dark cherry could camouflage the poles against red brick terraces. Bournville set the trend two years ago when lamps, bollards, cable boxes and railings in the villages of Stirchley, Bournville and Cotteridge were painted blue, green and red. Then Cadbury's paid for Bournville Lane lamps to be painted their corporate purple.

One of the architects of that scheme, Bournville councillor Timothy Huxtable, is now in charge of Birmingham's transport and highways.

He said: "It has really worked to give neighbourhoods an identity. It fits in with the council policy aim of vibrant neighbourhoods. Each area can decide if it is something they want to do."

Birmingham's new road contractor Amey is set to replace more than 41,000 out-of-date street lighting columns over the next five years as part of its £2.7 billion city roads contract and the scheme will be financed from that.