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Street lighting in Blackburn won't cost the earth thanks to local inventor Martin Watson – Levack.

Martin, a street lighting engineer, decided to develop his own Light Emitting Diode (LED) lighting unit to compete with higher energy products. His unit operates at just one quarter of the conventional 32 watt devices and is believed to be the lowest watt unit available to comply with European standards.

20 of his LED units will be used to illuminate bollards on Blackburn's Ring Road. If the units prove to be successful, all 500 of the Borough's illuminated bollards may be replaced, with potential savings of over £20,000 per year.

Ian Darlington, Lighting Manager for Capita Symonds, who manages the boroughs' street lighting, said "We are always looking for new ways to reduce the cost and carbon levels of lighting in the borough and this system appears to do just that."

"The units are also guaranteed to last for at least ten years compared to the existing 12 months for conventional lamps so will reduce maintenance time and costs."

Martin was able to bring his idea to life thanks to funding made available through Ideas North West, under the chairmanship of Basil Philipsz.

Martin said "It is exciting to know that one of my products may be used across the borough and will have significant impact on the areas' carbon footprint. I am grateful to Ideas North West for making this possible and to Blackburn with Darwen Council for the opportunity to showcase my work."

Councillor Alan Cottam, executive member for regeneration and environment, said: "The Council takes its environmental responsibilities seriously and I am delighted that we are making use of such innovation to reduce our demand for electricity. The fact that the inventor is a local makes it even better."

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About Capita Symonds

Capita Symonds is one of the UK's largest and most diverse multidisciplinary consultancies operating in the building design, civil engineering, environment, management and transport sectors. With over 4,000 staff in over 50 UK offices we offer an unrivalled scope of services and a unique blend of professional and technical skills to schemes of all types and complexities.

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