

## Surrey County Council – Part Night Lighting Consultation August 2016

As part of the proposal to implement a Part Night Lighting policy, the Council published a Consultation to seek feedback.

The Consultation was published via the Council's consultation page from 5 August to 2 September. Links to the consultation questionnaire were sent by email to members of the public who form part of the Council's residents' panels, published via social media and posters were displayed in the Council's network of 53 Libraries.

### Consultation Details

The following information was provided as background to the proposal:

#### **Overview**

The council is considering turning off some street lights from midnight to 5.00am. This would start from Autumn 2016.

The vast majority of the county's 89,000 street lights are already dimmed by up to 50% from 10.00pm to 5.30am each night. Switching some lights off for some of the night would deliver significant reductions in CO2 emissions and save money through reduced energy bills and lower carbon tax payments. Whilst lighting the roads during the evening and into the beginning of night time is essential while many vehicles and pedestrians are travelling, in some locations such as residential areas, the lights are on all night whether they are needed or not.

#### **Why We Are Consulting**

We want to know if you support this proposal and we want to hear your views. Many councils across the country have already implemented similar successful schemes and are saving large sums of money and reduced CO2 emissions. We have prepared answers to some of the questions from the residents of other counties from the street lighting webpage – [www.surreycc.gov.uk/streetlights](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/streetlights)

A study published in 2015 by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) found no link between street lights being dimmed or switched off and any increase in road accidents or crime.

To keep our roads safe we propose to keep the lights on in roads where:-

- There is more traffic
- There are traffic calming measures (speed cushions or humps, chicanes etc) or formal pedestrian crossings such as zebra crossings are present and they require lighting
- The council's Road Safety Team or Surrey Police think that less night lighting would cause more crime or more accidents.

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Respondents were then asked:

Are you in favour of the council switching off street lights for part of the night where deemed safe to do so in order to reduce energy bills and reduce CO2 emissions?

They were provided with 3 options:

**Many      Some      None**

Respondents were also offered the opportunity to provide any additional information for the Council to consider.

### Analysis

There were 842 responses which compared to other Consultations carried out by the Council is a significant level of response. The responses broke down as follows:

Answer	Number	Split
Many	390	46%
Some	253	30%
None	199	24%
<b>Total</b>	<b>842</b>	

As can be seen, nearly half of all respondents were in favour of switching off many lights and overall 76% were in favour of switching off at least some lights.

Many respondents left additional comments.

As could be expected, people in favour of switching “many” lights off commented on it being a positive step with comments covering the positive impact on the environment, reducing costs or improving the night sky.

Many of those selecting “some” provided comments around ensuring the right lights were turned off. In these cases there was a mixture of focus with some respondents favouring traffic routes over residential areas and others the exact opposite.

For those selecting none, there was a mixture of concerns mostly covering:

- Personal Safety – concerns about people walking during darkness (if lights were switched off in that location) whether returning home as a pedestrian or moving between a parked vehicle and their home. Comments included specific reference to people leaving for or returning from work during the switch off times, and some specific comments about concern for lone females and elderly people during this time.

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- Crime – in addition to the above, concerns that crime such as burglary and anti-social behaviour would increase due to the ability to operate unseen. Conversely there were other comments by those in favour of switching lights off which felt crime wouldn't increase or may even reduce as being able to see by street light aided crime.
- Road Safety – a number of respondents raised concerns about being able to see the footways (and any trip hazards etc) when walking if the street lights were not switched on at that time. Others raised concerns about the ability for drivers to see either pedestrians or cyclists if they were not highly visible (no lights, dark clothing) and the increase potential for accidents.
- Timing – a few respondents commented on the timing of the lights switch off but for slightly different reasons. These included shift workers walking to/from work (both Gatwick and Heathrow airports were referred to), people being more likely to return home from pubs, restaurants and entertainment venues after midnight at weekends.

There were also a number of comments suggesting alternatives such as use of LED or solar power to reduce energy consumption, switching off every other light to maintain some lighting and use of sensors to switch lights on when pedestrians or vehicles approach. All have been considered and discounted either on the grounds of the cost being prohibitive or in the case of solar power and motion sensors, the technology is not sufficiently advanced. It should be noted that these were identified in advance of the consultation being published and were explained in the Frequently Asked Questions.

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