

**CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS
JUNE 2018**

CABINET LEAD MEMBER FOR PLACE

(i) Petitions

Details of decision:

That the response, attached as Appendix 1, be approved

Reasons for decision:

To respond to the petition.

(Decision taken by the Cabinet Lead Member for Place – 5 June 2018)

Cabinet Lead Member for Place Decisions

5 June 2018

RESPONSE TO PETITION REGARDING STREET LIGHTING – PART NIGHT LIGHTING:

Get the street lights turned back on urgently.

Since Surrey County Council turned the street lights off in March 2017, crime statistics show that crime has risen dramatically by 35.5% between the hours of midnight and 05:00am as a direct result. Cllr Hodge has been provided with these statistics. Surrey County Council, by continuing to keep street lighting off, is not demonstrating a duty of care to Surrey residents. Get the street lights turned back on with immediate effect.

Submitted by: Mr John Lazenby
Signatures: 645

Response:

Surrey County Council (SCC) is facing significant financial pressures and as with other public sector organisations is having to explore all opportunities to generate savings to manage its budget. Switching street lights off in some residential areas is one of these initiatives which is expected to save in excess of £210k per annum and will also deliver CO2 savings.

We would like to confirm that we take the safety of our residents very seriously which is why we have worked very closely with the police when delivering this scheme and why over 400 roads were left on which meant that almost 4800 lights that were originally proposed to be switched off were removed on the advice of the police and our own road safety team.

The decision to implement Part Night Lighting (PNL) was not taken lightly and prior to implementation SCC worked closely with the police and has continued to do so. Where issues were identified and requests from the police have been received for lights to be turned on these have been accommodated.

PNL was originally introduced between 12 midnight and 5am. Following concerns raised by residents, particularly shift workers and those in the hospitality industry, the street lights were kept on for an hour longer.

Many other authorities have introduced similar part night lighting schemes successfully, without adverse effects and have made significant savings. With rising energy costs and reduced budgets these types of changes to street lighting are becoming more common. Independent academic research carried out by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine found no link between street lights being dimmed or switched off and any increase in road accidents or crime.

The Cabinet paper which can be found on the Council's website acknowledges that turning off lights may affect people's fear of crime and/or have an effect on road safety. This has been taken into account where possible by the introduction of the PNL Avoidance Criteria and input from crime reduction and road safety professionals.

Surrey Police undertook some initial analysis, which showed there was no correlation between crime and street lights being turned off. The Police Crime Commissioner (PCC) has recently published a further report into ‘Acquisitive Crime & Part Night Lighting’ which can be found on their website www.surrey-pcc.gov.uk. The report does recognise that there has been an increase in acquisitive crime (theft, burglary and vehicle crime) in Surrey but this is not consistent across the county and similar patterns have been experienced nationally that suggests the implementation of a PNL program may not necessarily be the sole cause of the increase. Displacement of offenders from London boroughs into Surrey, particularly those which neighbour Surrey may also have an impact.

It is important to note that for Surrey, increases in overall acquisitive crime began before the implementation of the PNL programme and increases have been replicated by other police force areas which haven’t had changes to street lighting. Although there has been an increase in recorded crime Surrey remains one of the safest counties in the country.

There may of course may be local issues and pockets of crime and we will continue to work with the police to address these and if requested by them, we will turn the lights back on in individual streets or areas where they have a criminal element operating.

With regard to the figures provided with and in support of the petition and the analysis of them, council Officers have reviewed the analysis of the information provided by Surrey Police and we dispute the interpretation of the information. It is generally accepted the data provided by Surrey Police is accurate, however there are a number of inconsistencies between these data and those presented in the petitioner’s analysis.

In the petitioner’s analysis, it was noted that there has been an overall increase in crime but this does not appear to have been factored into the calculations. These figures are taken out of context and it is not possible to draw valid conclusions without considering the overall changes the petitioners observed.

Using the data provided, it can be shown that there has actually been an overall decrease in crime committed between midnight and 5am (i.e. in 2016, 14.6% of crime occurred between midnight and 5am and this reduced to 14.1% in 2017).

Totals	Figure	Figure 12pm to 5am	Figure from 12pm to 5am (as % of total)
Totals 2015:	23538	3278	13.9%
Totals 2016:	24180	3528	14.6%
Totals 2017:	30529	4307	14.1%

The data provided appears to include all crime with no consideration as to whether street lighting could reasonably be considered to have an impact. Furthermore, not all areas within the Districts/Boroughs are affected by part night lighting (e.g. lights on ‘traffic routes’ are on all night). It is therefore not possible to draw any valid conclusions without separating this data.

It is also not possible to draw any conclusions about increases in criminality at this stage because the data is not available in sufficient detail. It is our intention to review crime data with Surrey Police when it is available to try and identify if there have been any actual changes as a result of implementing part night lighting. Even with support of the police each case is considered individually and there is no guarantee any change will be made

There are many complex issues that need to be considered when analysing patterns of crime, simply looking at County or District level data will not produce any useful or actionable information. We would however like to reconfirm that Surrey County Council will continue to work closely with Surrey Police to try and identify if there have been any actual changes as a result of the part night lighting policy.

At this time SCC does not intend to turn the lights back on.

Colin Kemp
Cabinet Lead Member for Place
5 June 2018