
139. LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S ITEMS**A.2 Part Night Street Lighting**

The Cabinet was reminded that, at its meeting held on 25 November 2014, the Council had received the following motion submitted by Councillor I J Henderson:

“That this Council seeks to reverse the impact of Essex County Council's Part Night Street Lighting policy within the Tendring District by paying to Essex County Council the sum of up to £44,000 in 2014/15 (Essex County Council have identified £127,000 as the annual amount saved by the night time switch off of the District's lights) to enable the Tendring District's street lights to remain on all night. The amount to be spent is to be taken from the Council contingency to meet the remainder of the 2014-2015 financial year.

Funding thereafter to be included for consideration as part of the budget setting process for 2015/16 on the basis that the funding of Tendring's street lights throughout the night be met by this Council only until Essex County Council is persuaded to reverse its unpopular and dangerous policy.”

The Chairman of the Council had referred that motion to Cabinet, who had considered it at its meeting held on 12 December 2014 and had resolved:-

“(a) in view of the significant financial implications of the proposal contained in the Motion, Cabinet requests that officers write to Essex County Council, Essex Police, Essex Fire and Rescue Services and the Ambulance Service to ask for written statements of their views as to whether the introduction of part night street lighting in Tendring has had a detrimental effect on the delivery of their services and to provide firm evidence to support their statements;

(b) the Town and Parish Councils in Tendring and the Automobile Association be invited to submit any evidence they have regarding the effects (positive or negative) of introducing part night street lighting;

(c) Essex Police be specifically requested to provide this Council with their best evidence (whether from Tendring, elsewhere in Essex or from elsewhere) as to the impact of part night street lighting on crime and the fear of crime;

(d) Essex County Council be requested to confirm whether they would be prepared to re-instate full night time street lighting in Tendring if the District Council meets the cost. If so, what would be the annual and ongoing costs;

(e) when responses to the requests are received, officers prepare a report to Cabinet setting out the statements and the evidence provided so that Cabinet can make an informed decision as to whether to support the motion in the light of the evidence; and

(f) Essex County Council be requested to supply details of any location in the District (and the reasons why) where Essex Police, Essex Fire and Rescue Services, 'First Responders' and the Ambulance Service have requested that

the street lights be turned back on in response to an accident or other incidents.”

The relevant organisations had then been contacted to request the information asked for by Cabinet. Following further debate on part night lighting at the full Council meeting held on 10 February 2015, that consultation had been widened to allow residents to comment.

It was reported that responses to the specific questions raised by Cabinet had been received from The AA, Essex County Fire and Rescue Services and Essex Police and from 14 Town and Parish Councils. The full responses were set out in the Appendices to item A.2 of the Report of the Leader of the Council but the main points were summarised as follows:-

- *Essex County Fire and Rescue – no incidents reported and therefore no evidence to support the Service having encountered an occasion where inadequate lighting prevented crews from fulfilling their operational duties. All Service fire engines have significant lighting available and Essex County Council can be requested that lighting is switched on or remains on if required.*
- *The AA – primary concern is with the blackout on urban and suburban roads of 40mph or faster and they consider that the evidence for not switching lights off on these road is irrefutable. The AA hope that in the longer term more councils will install energy efficiency lighting as a way of reducing energy costs rather than a switch off.*
- *Essex Police – not aware of any current significant crime trends around the night time economy that could be driven by impact of lighting. Crime trends are monitored and if there is evidence of an increase in any particular type of crime action will be taken. This includes the ability to request Essex County Council to turn the lights on.*
- *Town and Parish Councils – most Town or Parish Councils have not reported receiving significant complaints or negative feedback regarding part night lighting. Harwich Town Council has reported a number of concerns expressed by residents. For some Councils the effect is mitigated by them paying for lights themselves and there is concern, particularly in these Town and Parish Councils, about residents paying through council tax two or three times for street lighting.*

The Cabinet was informed that there had been 309 responses received from individual residents to the online consultation. Of those 203 had positively asked for the lights to be switched back on with a further 26 expressing concerns about the lights being turned off. The reasons cited included:-

- *Generally feeling less safe in the dark;*
- *Fear of more crimes being committed especially burglary and vandalism. In the case of vandalism many people felt that there was increased damage to cars since the lights have been turned off. Several also mentioned that their fears around crime were exacerbated by concern that Clacton Police Station may close ;*
- *Danger of falling on uneven pavements, kerbs etc.;*

- *Concern that emergency services would be unable to find the location of incidents in the dark and that criminals cannot be seen or identified in the dark;*
- *Concern that people out very early in the morning or late at night e.g. shift workers, partygoers etc. could be attacked;*
- *Not being able to see hazards whilst driving such as pedestrians, potholes etc.*

The Cabinet was made aware that there were 67 respondents who had positively asked that the lights continued to be turned off between midnight and 5am. The reasons given were:

- *Better able to sleep at night without the glare from street lights;*
- *Ability to view the night sky and see the stars;*
- *There are benefits both financially and environmentally;*
- *The funding put aside to meet the cost of turning the lights back on could be better used e.g. more policing, social care, health;*
- *Turning off the lights discourages criminals as they cannot see in the dark either;*
- *Not wanting to pay two or three times for street lights to be on.*

The Cabinet was advised that the remaining respondents had not expressed a positive view one way or the other but had suggested alternative approaches that would still make cost savings but would allow the lights to be on, including installing LED lights or only turning off every second or third light.

It was also reported that information had also been received that the “We want our lights back on.....Tendring” campaign had secured approximately 10,500 signatures in favour of street lights being lit throughout the night and that the petition would be presented to Essex County Council’s Highways Department once 14,000 signatures had been obtained.

Members were aware that, at the Council meeting held on 10 February 2015, the Leader of the Council, in his Budget speech had made a commitment to set aside a one-off sum of £160,000 pending a final decision on part night street lighting by the Council.

Having considered the consultation responses received and having discussed this matter fully:

It was proposed by Councillor Page, seconded by Councillor P B Honeywood and **RESOLVED** that in order to take forward the present motion to Council, the Leader of the Council will recommend an amendment to Council that Essex County Council be requested to switch on street lights within the Tendring District at night and that the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive be authorised to discuss the terms, including funding arrangements, with Essex County Council and bring proposals back to a meeting of full Council.