

Key Decision Required:	No	In the Forward Plan	No
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CABINET

20 NOVEMBER 2015

REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR COAST PROTECTION

A. PART - NIGHT STREET LIGHTING: PROPOSALS FROM THE WORKING PARTY AND NEW INFORMATION FROM ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To enable Cabinet to consider and note the findings and recommendations of the Part-Night Street Lighting Working Party which are to be reported to Full Council on 24 November.

To provide Cabinet with details of a letter from the Leader of the County Council to the Leader of Tendring District Council in which he sets out the conditions which would apply should the District Council decide to fund all or part restoration of night-time street lighting in the District and to enable Cabinet to decide what recommendation(s) it wishes to make to the Council in light of this new information.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council decided, on 24 March 2015:

“That Tendring District Council requests Essex County Council to switch on street lights within the Tendring District at night to be funded from the £160,000 set aside within the 2014/2015 Fit for Purpose budget. Further, 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.”

Following this, on 7 July 2015, the Leader of the Council announced the formation of a Working Party, led by the Portfolio Holder for Coast Protection, to establish which parts of the District wished to have night time street lighting restored.

Findings of the Working Party

The Terms of Reference for the Working Party provide for it to identify those areas of the District where the predominant local view is that the lights should be switched back on at night-time and those where the view is that they should not.

All District Councillors and Town and Parish Councils have been asked to provide this information for their Ward or Parish and the responses are set out in Appendix A.

The Working Party met on 9 November 2015 to consider these responses and agreed that if the Council wishes to propose part on / part off lighting arrangements to the County Council then it would be preferable (and consistent with the majority of views expressed by Members / Town and Parish Councils) to submit a simple proposal based broadly on the lights in the main urban areas of Clacton and Harwich being switched back on and to remain switched off in the rest of the District.

The findings of the Working Party are to be submitted to the Full Council meeting on 24 November 2015. They have been included in this report to Cabinet for the sake of completeness because it is necessary to make Cabinet aware of the new information now provided by the County Council as set out in the letter from the Leader of Essex County Council.

Letter from Essex County Council

Attached as Appendix B to this report is a letter received from the Leader of Essex County Council (ECC) to the Leader of Tendring District Council (TDC), which states that any agreement to reinstate street lighting during the night will be subject to conditions which mean that the cost of any commitment would be in excess of the £160,000 set aside by the Council.

Having considered this report, the findings of the Working Party and the letter from ECC, the Cabinet is asked to determine whether it wishes to make a recommendation to Council as to how to proceed.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that :

- 1. Cabinet notes the recommendations to Council of the Part Night Street Lighting Working Party that if the Council wishes to obtain costings from the County Council to restore night time street lighting in Tendring for parts of the District but not others it should be on the following basis:-**

a. Lights to be switched back on all night for the following:-

- i. All Clacton, Jaywick and Holland on Sea wards namely Alton Park, Bockings Elm, Burrsville, Golf Green, Haven, Peter Bruff, Pier, Rush Green, St Bartholemews, St James, St Johns, St Marys and St Pauls.**
- ii. All Harwich, Dovercourt and Ramsey and Parkeston wards namely Harwich East, Harwich East Central, Harwich West, Harwich West Central and Ramsey and Parkeston.**
- iii. The ward of Brightlingsea.**
- iv. The Parish of Little Oakley.**

b. Lights to remain switched off at night for the following:

- i. All other wards of the Tendring District namely Alresford, Ardleigh and Little Bromley, Beaumont and Thorpe, Bradfield, Wrabness and Wix, Frinton, Great Bentley, Hamford, Holland and Kirby, Homelands, Lawford, Little Clacton and Weeley, Manningtree, Mistley, Little Bentley and Tendring, St Osyth and Point Clear, Thorrington, Frating, Elmstead and Great Bromley and Walton.**
- ii. The Parish of Great Oakley**

- 2. Following consideration of the recommendations of the Part Night Light Working Party and the letter from the Leader of Essex County Council, Cabinet determines whether to make a recommendation to Council.**

PART 2 – IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

FINANCE, OTHER RESOURCES AND RISK

Finance and Other Resources

There is a one-off sum of £160,000 identified within the Council's 2014/15 Fit for Purpose Budget, to fund any costs for one year, pending a final decision on part-night street lighting by the Council.

ECC is prepared to consider, subject to conditions, switching the lights back on in certain areas within the district, as identified by this Council. The cost of doing so to Tendring District Council has not yet been established but it is clear that it will exceed the funds set aside as a result of the Council decision.

The Council must reduce its budget by £2million by 1 April 2016 and by at least a further £2million by 1 April 2017 with further future budget reductions expected after that.

Any decision to commit to funding part-night lighting will increase the savings which will have to be found from other TDC services.

LEGAL

The provision of street lighting is a County Council function and not a District Council function but it is within the powers of the Council to pay for additional street lighting to be provided by the County Council for all or part of the District should it choose to do so.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Consideration has been given to the implications of the proposed decision in respect of the following and any significant issues are set out below.

Crime and Disorder

From the responses received from Members and Town and Parish Councils, there is no hard evidence to suggest that having the street lights off during the night has had any significant adverse effects on the levels of crime and disorder within the district.

This view was echoed by the Police and Crime Commissioner for Essex, Mr Nick Alston, at a meeting of the Council's Community Leadership and Partnerships Committee, held on 26 October 2015.

Area or Wards Affected

The Members representing all wards have been consulted and those which have responded are shown in Appendix A to this report.

Consultation and Public Engagement

The findings within this report are as a direct result of responses received from Members and Town and Parish Councils within Tendring.

Details of previous public consultations in this regard, are set out in Appendix C.

PART 3 – SUPPORTING INFORMATION

BACKGROUND

The key milestones in the Council's consideration of the Part Night Street Lighting Issue are as follows

December 2013	The Council responded to the County Council's initial consultation on the detail of their proposals to cease night-time street lighting (between Midnight and 5am) with effect from January 2014. TDC had advertised the consultation and sought public contributions regarding which lights met the ECC criteria for being left on and these were incorporated into the TDC response.
25 November 2014	Council considered a motion for TDC to fund the lights being switched on for the remainder of the year and funding to be included in future years budgets until ECC reverse their decision. Motion referred to Cabinet.
12 December 2014	Cabinet considered the motion and requested that letters be sent to the County Council, Police /Fire/ Ambulance services, all Town and Parish Councils, and the AA seeking evidence of the impact of the cessation of night time street lighting. This consultation was subsequently widened to invite submissions from Members of the public. A summary of the responses to these letters and from the public is set out in Appendix C.
10 February 2015	£160,000 was set aside in the budget to meet the costs of restoring night-time street lighting. ECC announced that the period during which the lights would be switched off will be between 1am and 5 am from the end of March 2015.

The Cabinet's recommendations regarding the motion (initially considered on 25 November 2014) were considered on 24 March 2015. The decision of Council is set out under "Current Position" below.

CURRENT POSITION

The resolution by Council at its meeting held on 24 March 2015, was as follows:

"That Tendring District Council requests Essex County Council to switch on street lights within the Tendring district at night to be funded from the £160,000 set aside within the 2014/2015 Fit-for-Purpose Budget. Further, 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."

At its meeting held on 7 July 2015, the Leader of the Council, Councillor Stock, made a statement in respect of part-night street lighting to the effect that a cross-party, Portfolio Holder Working Party be set up to establish where in the District the predominant view was that the lights should be switched back on and where they should be left off.

The Working Party has met on two occasions (10 August and 12 October 2015) with a further meeting scheduled to be held on 9 November 2015.

At the first meeting on 10 August, the Working Party agreed its terms of reference and how it wished to gather the information required. This involved writing to all 60 Members and all Town and Parish Councils and, in order to promote a good response, each of the Working Party Members was allocated a number of Members and Town / Parish Councils to contact to encourage them to respond.

A summary of responses received by Members and Town and Parish Councils is attached as Appendix A to this report and, where appropriate this includes responses by Town and Parish Councils from the Spring 2015 consultation.

At the time of writing this report, 46 Members have responded.

The Working Party held its third and final meeting on Monday 9 November 2015 and received the responses set out in Appendix A.

It was of the view that a clear picture emerged of a desire in the main urban areas of Clacton and Harwich for the night time lighting to be switched back on and agreement that they should remain off in the rest of the District.

The Working Party felt that it would be better, more consistent and more likely to receive a prompt provision of costings by the County Council, if the proposal put forward was a relatively simple one with wards within urban areas either switched on or left off.

In the case of Brightlingsea, where an alternative proposal was put forward, the Working Party took the view that on the balance of comments from the Members and the Town Council the request should be for the lights to be on.

The Chairman of the Working Party has also agreed to include recommendations relating to the Parishes of Great and Little Oakley.

To conclude, the Working Party was of the view that if the Council asked to obtain costings from the County Council for a partial reintroduction of night time street lighting then it should be on the basis set out in Recommendation 1. of this report.

Conditions imposed by Essex County Council

Following the Council decision on 24 March 2015 the Leader of TDC, together with the Chief Executive met with the Leader of ECC to inform them of the Council's decision and, as per the Council decision, to discuss the potential terms and funding arrangements for lights to be switched back on. The discussion included the possibility of lighting in some areas being left on whilst left off in others, in accordance with the predominant public views.

The Leader of ECC undertook to look into the issue and whether a partial restoration of night-time lighting could be funded by TDC and to respond formally in due course. Following a reminder letter the County Council's formal response was submitted to TDC on 25 September 2015. A copy of the letter is set out in Appendix B.

The letter sets out four conditions which the County Council will impose in respect of any agreement which are as follows:

- Agreement to be for a period of four years;
- Payment to reflect cost of supplying energy and carbon related costs;
- Payment to be made on a quarterly basis;
- Notice of termination of agreement must be at least one year.

The requirement for any agreement to be for a four year period is the reason for bringing this report to Cabinet for consideration because the cost of any agreement will inevitably exceed the available budget.

The most recent estimate received from ECC is that the cost to TDC of restoring night-time street lighting across the District would be £147,000 per year.

Any decision by the Council to commit funding for a four year period (for any purpose) must be made in light of the fact that the Council must make ongoing savings of £2million to balance the budget for 2016/17 and at least a further £2million for 2017/18.

With this in mind Cabinet should consider whether it wishes to make any recommendations to Full Council as to whether the Council should proceed with the proposal to fund the restoration of night-time lighting and if so on what basis.

BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR THE DECISION

There are no background papers in relation to this report.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Portfolio Holder Working Party on Part-Night Street Lighting – Responses Received to Letter to All TDC Members and all Town and Parish Councils within the District

Appendix B

Letter dated 25 September 2015, by the Leader of ECC, to the Leader of TDC

Appendix C

Summary of previously received consultation responses.

Appendix A

PORTFOLIO HOLDER WORKING PARTY: PART-NIGHT STREET LIGHTING - RESPONSES RECEIVED TO LETTER TO ALL MEMBERS OF TENDRING DISTRICT COUNCIL

Area	Councillor	Ward	Lights Back On	Lights Stay Off	Comments	Comments by Town or Parish Council
Brightlingsea	Chapman	Brightlingsea	—	—	Alternate lights with full lighting around residential homes.	Brightlingsea Town Council: <i>Lights should remain on in areas that have residential homes and emergency premises (Police, Fire etc.). Switch off of lights should be weather dependant.</i>
	Steady	Brightlingsea	No Response			
	Yallop	Brightlingsea	—	—	Alternate lights with full lighting around residential homes.	
Clacton	Amos	St John's	No Response			
	Bennison	Peter Bruff	✓			
	Broderick	Haven	✓			
	Cawthron	Alton park	No Response			
	Chittock	Bockings Elm	No Response			
	Everett	Rush Green	✓			
	Griffiths	St James	✓		A number of individual resident replies: Majority YES to turn back on	
	Hones	St Mary's	✓			
	Honeywood	Pier	✓			
	Hughes	St James		✓		
	Khan	Pier	✓			
King	St Bartholomew's	✓				

Clacton (continued)	Massey	St Paul's	—	—	Contacted Brightlingsea and Cllr Steady (see above). Meeting with Cllrs. Amos and Griffiths to discuss amongst other things shortly.	
	Mooney	St Paul's	✓			
	Newton	Rush Green	✓			
	Pemberton	Peter Bruff	✓			
	Porter	Alton Park	No Response			
	Raby	Golf Green	✓			
	Skeels (Jnr)	Burrsville	✓		During Winter	
	Skeels (Snr)	St John's		✓		
	Stephenson	St Mary's	✓			
	Watson	Golf Green	✓			
	Whitmore	Bockings Elm	✓			
Winfield	St Bartholomew's	✓				
Frinton and Walton	Davis	Hamford	—	—	Unclear	Frinton and Walton Town Council: No formal consensus but earlier comment requested that lights remain on at Princes Esplanade.
	Gray	Homelands	✓			
	Miles	Walton		✓		
	Platt	Hamford		✓		
	Poonian	Walton		✓	No-one unduly concerned.	
	Turner	Frinton		✓		
	Watling	Frinton		✓		
	B Brown	Harwich East Central	No Response			Harwich Town Council: Unable to obtain evidence from emergency services regarding
	J Brown	Harwich West	✓			

Harwich	Callender	Harwich West	No Response			<p><i>negative impact of PNSL. Numerous reports of incidents where emergency vehicles have not been able to locate properties or water hydrants to tackle fires. CCTV footage of no value as too dark. Incidents have also been reported of burglars acting casually whilst gaining entry to local shops knowing they would not be identified in the dark. Potholes and uneven pavements not being spotted in the dark.</i></p> <p><i>Reports of reduced business in local pubs and restaurants and community venues resulting from customers seeking to get home before the lights go out.</i></p> <p><i>HTC accepts this does not constitute documentary evidence, significant anecdotal evidence available would indicate that PNSL is having a seriously detrimental impact on the local night-time economy.</i></p>
	Calver	Harwich East Central	✓			
	Fowler	Harwich West Central	✓			
	I Henderson	Harwich East	✓			
	J Henderson	Harwich West Central	✓			
Manningtree	Coley	Manningtree, Mistley, Little Bentley and Tendring		✓		<p>Manningtree Town Council: There is no negative feedback - happy with current arrangements</p>
	GV Guglielmi	Manningtree,		✓		<p>Mistley Parish Council: No</p>

		Mistley, Little Bentley and Tendring				<p><i>specific issues were raised. It was recognised that ECC had committed to keeping on lights at footpaths in alleys linked to residential areas. Suggested that the switch-off time could be between 1.00am and 4.00am rather than 12 midnight and 5.00am. Otherwise, happy with current arrangements</i></p> <p>Little Bentley and Tendring Parish Councils: <i>Have no street lighting.</i></p>
	Baker	Lawford		✓		<p><i>See individual comments from Parish Council, alongside Cllr V Guglielmi's entry below.</i></p>
Rural	Bray	Little Clacton and Weeley	—	—	Responses are around 50/50	<p>Weeley Parish Council: <i>Not aware of any problems in Weeley since PNSL was introduced, however the parish Council owns a significant number of street lights in the village so any negative impact from ECC's policy is minimised. Should TDC agree to use its funds to reverse the PNSL policy then the Parish Council considers that residents would be paying three times, to ECC, TDC and the Parish Council. Weeley would be subsidising</i></p>

Rural (continued)						<i>other parishes and towns that rely more heavily on ECC lighting. The Parish Council has already had to increase its precept largely due to the cost of maintaining the lighting columns. It is inequitable to expect Weeley residents to bear a further burden of cost. YES to lights off.</i>
	M Brown	Little Clacton and Weeley	No Response			
	Bucke	Holland and Kirby	—	—	Alternate lights to save 50% of energy used	
	Cossens	Holland and Kirby	No Response			
	Fairley	Bradfield, Wrabness and Wix	No Response			
	Ferguson	Ramsey and Parkeston	✓			Ramsey and Parkeston Parish Council: <i>Is of the view that due to the port, railway and shift workers the lights must go back on.</i>
	V Guglielmi	Lawford			✓	Lawford Parish Council: <i>No feedback, either positive or negative, has been received from local residents about the local impact of PNSL. Residents have expressed concern about the idea that TDC pays to have the lights</i>

Rural (continued)						<i>switched back on. Does not like the idea of TDC Council Tax being used in this way especially as they pay for lighting under ECC Council Tax. The consensus is that if residents of a particular area or town want the lights back on, their own local precept should be raised to cover the cost.</i>
	Heaney	Thorrington, Frating, Elmstead and Great Bromley		✓		Parish Councils: All Parish Councils YES to lights off. <i>See individual comments from Parish Councils, alongside Cllr Nicholls' entry below.</i>
	Howard	Great Oakley and Little Oakley	—	—	Referred to responses from Parish Councils	Little Oakley Parish Council: <i>Would like the lights back on if Tendring District Council are going to go ahead and pay for them to be switched on, but are opposed to TDC paying for the lights to be switched on as:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Tendring District Council are not the lighting authority</i> • <i>It would mean that all of their parishioners would be paying for lights four times i.e Highways agency, Essex County Council (Lighting</i>

Rural (continued)						<p>Authority) Parish Council Precept and Tendring District Council.</p> <p>Little Oakley Parish Council feel it is unfair to expect our parishioners to pay for a service that they are already paying for. However, it would be unfair still, for our parishioners to pay for Tendring District Council to light other areas while leaving our Essex County Council lights off.</p> <p>Great Oakley Parish Council: Supports the lights remaining off.</p>
	Land	Beaumont and Thorpe		✓		
	McWilliams	Great Bentley		✓	Village owns some lights. Wishes ECC owned lights to remain switched off.	<p>Great Bentley Parish Council: The issue hardly affects GB as most of the street lights are operated by the Parish Council and are lit through the night. The residents of GB are currently paying indirectly for street lighting through Council Tax payments to ECC and directly to the Parish Council. TDC's proposal will add further cost to residents for no additional or improvement to service.</p>

						Therefore the parish Council opposes any efforts by TDC to fund street lighting.
Rural (continued)	Nicholls	Thorrington, Frating, Elmstead and Great Bromley		✓		<p>Parish Councils: All Parish Councils YES to lights off.</p> <p>Elmstead Parish Council: not aware of any complaints in the village about part-night street lighting.</p> <p>Frating Parish Council: General view is that switching off lights in Frating has not had a negative effect. There are positive effects in viewing the night sky. Residents are seldom out after midnight apart from exercising dogs when torches are in use. Some users of licensed premises have had to get used to using torches when leaving late at night but no complaints from a practical point of view have been received.</p> <p>Great Bromley Parish Council: Unanimous decision that the Parish Council objects to the switching on of the street lights in the Tendring area.</p>

	Scott	Alresford	No Response			<i>Alresford Parish Council: Owns many lights in the Village. Not really an issue, although elderly feel vulnerable with lights off.</i>
	Stock	Ardleigh and Little Bromley		✓		<i>Little Bromley Parish Council: NO to lights being switched on.</i>
	Talbot	St Osyth's		✓		<i>St Osyth Parish Council: There is little evidence to suggest that turning off street lights has led to an increase in crime and traffic collisions, although that is the public perception. The vast majority of people are usually home by the time the lights go off and do not ordinarily leave their home until the lights come back on. In order to cater for those who socialise at the weekend, there could be benefit in changing the switch off time to between 1.00am and 6.00am. It was felt that by funding the switching on of lights itself, TDC could be imposing a double taxation on its residents. Therefore, whilst Councillors and the public would like to see lights remain on, the Parish Council does not support the use of TDC</i>
	White	St Osyth's	No Response			

						<i>funds to do so. <u>NOT unhappy</u> with the lights being turned off from 01.00 each night.</i>
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Essex County Council
Leader's Office
County Hall
Chelmsford
Essex CM1 1QH



Date: 25 September 2015

Cllr Neil Stock
Leader - Tendring District Council
Town Hall
Station Road
Clacton on Sea
Essex CO15 1SE

Our Ref: DF/AC

Dear Neil

Re: Part Night Lighting

Thank you for your letter regarding street lighting on September 9, 2015. My apologies for the delay in responding to you.

My understanding of the deal that you may wish to do with us is to pay to keep the lights on in certain urban towns in Tendring, while keeping the lights off in rural areas where the policy has proved to be popular among residents.

I would kindly ask for you to write to me specifying the exact areas in Tendring that you would wish the lights to remain lit for the duration of the night. Once I have received this information, I will ask officers to analyse what the cost to Tendring District Council would be the areas you have specified.

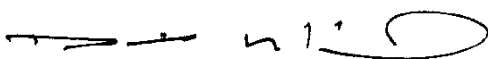
Without this information, I am afraid I am not in a position to progress discussion on the specifics. However, in any deal we would be seeking to make would be based on the following terms:

- Agreement to be for a period of 4 years
- Payment to reflect cost of supplying energy, and carbon related costs
- Payment to be made on a quarterly basis
- Notice of termination of agreement must be at least one year

I would also like to take this opportunity to formally thank you for the collaboration and contribution you have been personally making to advance the devolution deal for Essex. Your insights have proved most valuable in the process and I welcome your role on the Leader's group on governance to progress work on the rules and structure of a Combined Authority.

I very much look forward to continuing our productive and close working relationship in the future.

Yours sincerely



Councillor David Finch
Leader of the Council

RESPONSES TO REQUESTS FOR EVIDENCE AND PUBLIC COMMENTS SPRING 2015

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 to the meeting of the Cabinet held on 13 March 2015 and 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 Council 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 Council 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.*

Members were 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 ECC’s Highways Department once 14,000 signatures had been obtained.