

Part-Night Lighting – Frequently Asked Questions

1. What are the council's legal responsibilities for street lighting?

There is no legal requirement for local authorities in the UK to provide street lighting. However, where we provide street lighting on public highways (including roads and footways) we do have a responsibility to maintain it. This includes the county councils' streetlights, illuminated traffic signs and bollards on the public highway, but not lighting in private areas, private car parks or on new housing developments.

Not all streetlighting in Oxfordshire is the responsibility of the county council. Some parish and town councils have installed their own street lighting systems, and they are responsible for maintaining these.

2. What is part-night lighting?

Part-night lighting is an approach to dimming, or switching off, streetlighting in an area for part of the night. Over half of local authorities have introduced part-night lighting, with the first schemes being introduced in the 1970s. It is intended to be used at night during the hours when the fewest people are using the streets.

Part-night lighting is not the same as 'Dark Skies'. Dark Skies is a national initiative which aims to conserve night skies, reduce light pollution and increase awareness of the impacts of night light. It encourages responsible outdoor lighting practices and advocates for policies to protect natural night environments.

3. Will part-night lighting be compulsory?

No. Part-night lighting will only be implemented where it has been:

- requested by a town and parish council/meeting, or local governance authority
- supported by the area's County Councillor
- is suitable for part-night lighting and not subject to any of the exemptions outline in the framework
- subject to a public consultation to hear residents' and stakeholders' views
- approved at the council's Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management meeting.

4. Why is the council proposing a part-night lighting framework?

Implementing part-night lighting can have several benefits, including:

Reducing carbon emissions:

Last year our street lighting generated over 2,420 tonnes of carbon emissions, around a third of the council's overall emissions and the largest contributor to them.

If lights are switched on for fewer hours, they will use less electricity and carbon emissions will be reduced. We estimate that part-night lighting could reduce energy consumption by over 5,000kWh per day, saving over 400 tonnes of carbon per year. This could also reduce annual spending on energy by over £400,000.

Reducing light pollution:

Reducing light pollution can boost nature recovery and biodiversity, as it creates an improved night-time environment for wildlife. This is especially true for encouraging nocturnal wildlife, such as moths, nighttime pollinators, some birds, and a wide range of invertebrates.

People can also benefit directly, with evidence linking reduced light pollution to better sleep patterns and the many health benefits that can go hand in hand with this.

5. Is part-night lighting definitely happening in Oxfordshire?

Yes and no.

Some places in Oxfordshire already have part-night lighting and our current street lighting policy allows for it. This consultation is asking for your views on our draft part-night lighting implementation framework, and is not about removing part-night lighting where it already exists.

But part night lighting is not definitely happening across the whole of Oxfordshire. In September 2025, the county council's cabinet will decide whether to go forward with this framework for implementing part-night lighting.

If cabinet approves the proposed framework, then town and parish councils/meetings, or local governance authorities, will be able to apply to the county council and request part-night lighting schemes for locations in their areas. Applications will also require the support of the area's

Oxfordshire County Council Councillor prior to submission. If the scheme application meets the part-night lighting criteria and following a public consultation on 'Let's talk Oxfordshire', the scheme will go forward for a decision on its approval at the council's Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management meeting. The part-night lighting scheme would be implemented if approved at this meeting. An important part of deciding whether a location is suitable for a part-night lighting scheme will be listening to residents' views through a public consultation on each scheme.

6. How can people have their say on part-night lighting?

There will be several ways in which people can have, or have had, their say on part-night lighting:

- We have already worked with a wide range of stakeholders to develop this framework, including:
 - ✓ Community group representatives
 - ✓ Representatives of women and girls' groups
 - ✓ Emergency services and community safety teams
 - ✓ District, town and parish councillors
 - ✓ Universities and student unions
 - ✓ Employers of shift and nighttime economy workers
- This public consultation gives people the opportunity to share their views on the draft framework for part-night lighting. This is the proposal for how part night lighting could be implemented. The results will inform the cabinet decision in September 2025.
- If the cabinet decision is to move forward with part-night lighting, where the scheme meets the part night lighting criteria and does not include any exempt areas, and there are no technical reasons for part-night lighting not to be implemented in that location, a public consultation on 'Let's Talk Oxfordshire' would be held to make sure that local residents', local stakeholders' and community group voices are heard

7. Are you listening to vulnerable groups?

Yes.

To develop this draft framework we engaged with representatives from a range of communities, including people with disabilities, women and girls, LGBTQ+ people, people of different ages, and people from different ethnic and faith backgrounds. They helped us to understand the potential impacts of part-night lighting on their communities and explore how we could mitigate negative effects, and they are sharing this consultation with their communities to make sure that their voices are heard.

As part of this consultation we are asking some (optional) demographic questions, this will help us to understand the different perspectives of different groups.

An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) is being conducted to help us understand how part-night lighting could impact people with vulnerabilities and those with protected characteristics (as defined in the Equality Act 2010). As well as assessing the potential impacts, the EIA lists actions to be taken, timescales for them to be completed and monitoring arrangements. The EIA is considered a 'live document' and will be revisited over the course of the part night lighting programme.

8. Would part-night lighting be the same across the whole county?

No, part-night lighting is not a one size fits all approach. It could be implemented in different ways to meet the needs of different communities.

We are considering two 'standard' timeframes for part night lighting:

- Between 11:30 pm and 05:30 am in **rural** locations
- Between midnight and 05:30 am in **urban** locations

This is based on when the fewest people are using roads and paths, and when the last trains and buses run. These times could be tailored for an area's individual needs (e.g. if the last trains arrive after midnight). There may also be temporary variations for legitimate reasons such as public events or road works.

There will be some factors which may make a location unsuitable for a part-night lighting scheme, such as at road crossings, if there are high levels of crime or road incidents, or where there is public CCTV. One of the things we're asking for in this consultation is your views on the criteria that would make a location exempt from part-night lighting.

9. Why can't you just dim the lights, or use energy efficient lights?

Many of Oxfordshire's streetlights already use energy efficient lights and dimming technology. As lights have come to the end of their structural life they have been replaced with the newest technology, including LED lights. These new streetlights are already operating more efficiently, saving energy and requiring less maintenance.

10. What about the possible effects on crime and road safety?

We are working closely with Thames Valley Police and other relevant stakeholders, and they have helped to shape this draft framework.

While research has found that there is no significant evidence indicating part-night lighting increases crime rates, or road traffic incidents, we are proposing that locations at high risk of road traffic incidents, or with high levels of crime, be exempt and are not be eligible for part-night lighting schemes. Road traffic incidents and crime levels will also be monitored after a part-night lighting scheme is introduced and changes, including reversal, could be made to the scheme if needed.

Street lighting levels can also affect people's perceptions of safety. We are working with Thames Valley Police to ensure part-night lighting schemes do not take away from the need to deliver well-lit public spaces that provide a sense of safety. Working with Thames Valley Police, we will use data from Street Safe ([StreetSafe | Police.uk](#)) to help us understand how safe people feel in different locations. Street Safe allows you to report any safety concerns you may have about a particular area or location, even when no crime has taken place. You can share your safety concerns anonymously if you wish.

We also encourage you to use our 'Fix My Street' ([FixMyStreet](#)) online tool to report any highway or street safety issues.

11. How much would part-night lighting cost?

The total costs and savings of part-night lighting would depend on:

- how many local areas want to have part-night lighting, and

- the number and type of streetlights affected by each scheme

Each scheme would be different, as it would be tailored to the location's individual needs. This means that we can't give an accurate estimate of the costs at this time, but we can assure you that the cost of implementing part-night lighting would be managed through existing budgets.