

STREET LIGHTING (SCS-SCR-11)

FOREWORD

The decision in 2006 to trial a midnight switch off of street lights in residential areas of the two districts of Uttlesford and Maldon was controversial. As part of evaluating the pilots, the Cabinet Member for Highways, Councillor Norman Hume, requested the Safer and Stronger Communities P&SC to conduct a thoroughgoing investigation into the experiments, and to make recommendations to him on whether they should be continued and expanded or abandoned, and also to take evidence on whether technology had advanced in the 2006-09 period such that other methods of achieving the necessary savings in carbon emissions could be achieved.

The Committee embarked on its task determined to hear evidence and views from all sides of the debate. It was known these opinions would be entrenched and polarised. Residents in roads where there had been a sudden increase in the number of burglaries, for instance, following the switch-off, were understandably concerned. In such cases it was small comfort to hear there had been no increase in crime overall, and that other streets in areas away from the pilots had had similar experiences. The Committee attempted to acknowledge but not place undue stress on emotive responses, and also to seek middle ground wherever it could. We were very pleasantly surprised by the ability of almost all witnesses to look at the situation rationally and dispassionately and to come up with suggestions which reflect the innate commonsense of Essex people. The summary of evidence below indicates that most respondents thought that *reducing* light levels was an acceptable compromise and alternative to the midnight switch-off.

The Committee's report and recommendations take up this suggestion, which, thanks to new technology, becomes a viable alternative, which it was not in 2006.

I commend this report to the Cabinet Member, the Council, and to the people of Essex, as a clear way forward which will enable us to save emissions and money, as well as maintaining the security lighting gives to our residents.

The Committee extended its thanks to the officers who had helped it conduct the scrutiny with such efficiency, Graham Redgwell and Janet Mills, together with those who set up the webcasting (Ian Myers and Antoinette Mortley) I would also like to thank Councillor Ray Howard, for acting as vice chairman during the scrutiny.

Councillor Chris Pond
Deputy Chairman of the Safer and Stronger Communities Policy and Scrutiny
Committee and Chairman for this scrutiny

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings	Recommendations
<p>Finding 1</p> <p>It was clear Council policy that a reduction in CO₂ emissions directly attributable to the County Council should be sought, and the Committee thought that greater weight should be given in publicity to this than to making financial savings, even though the two effectively marched in tandem.</p> <p>Finding 2</p> <p>Financial savings should lead either to a cut in Council Tax levels or to money being redistributed to other schemes of benefit to Essex residents.</p>	<p>Recommendation 1</p> <p>The Council should aim to achieve savings of up to 70% of the current carbon emission footprint and thus of the lighting energy bill, principally through the use of new technology, the negotiation of contracts related to actual rather than unmetered usage, and also the turning off of any unnecessary street lights. This should be set as a target to be achieved within a set timescale (possibly three years).</p> <p>Owner: Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation</p> <p>Implementation Review Date: May 2010</p> <p>Impact Review Date: January 2011</p>
<p>Finding 3</p> <p>The pilot schemes had been running long enough for data to be collected and analysed and for viable conclusions to be reached.</p> <p>Finding 4</p> <p>On the basis of Finding (3), no more similar pilot schemes were required.</p>	<p>Recommendation 2</p> <p>The Council should implement the programme to reduce the emissions and cost of ECC and local council owned and operated street lighting across the whole county.</p> <p>Owner: Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation</p> <p>Implementation Review Date: May 2010</p> <p>Impact Review Date: January 2011</p>
<p>Finding 5</p> <p>On the evidence heard, the Committee did not believe there was any</p>	<p>Recommendation 3</p> <p>Any changes should be implemented across an agreed timescale. Given the location of the pilot areas, the Council might decide that a swathe across the</p>

<p>overwhelming reason why the pilot schemes might not, with an element of fine tuning, be rolled out across all 12 Essex districts. However, trying to implement a 'one size fits all' approach in every part of such a large and diverse county as Essex would not be possible, given its mix of urban, suburban, and rural areas. The advent of new technology meant also that a more adjustable and intelligent method of advancing street lighting carbon savings, and thus cost, was available. This could be applied across the County, and to an even greater level than had been achieved with the midnight switch off in the pilot areas.</p> <p>Finding 6</p> <p>Whilst the solution should apply to all 12 districts, any attempt to introduce practices countywide in the same timescale would be extremely difficult in logistical terms and costly in capital terms. Therefore, the Committee favoured a phased, and as much as possible, an agreed, approach to the changes.</p>	<p>centre of the county (to include, therefore, towns the size of Chelmsford and Braintree) should be the first area to be reviewed and converted to new technology, such that its operation in a range of settlements wider than that in the pilots could be monitored.</p> <p>Owner: Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation</p> <p>Implementation Review Date: May 2010</p> <p>Impact Review Date: January 2011</p> <p>Recommendation 4</p> <p>Whilst a normal turn off time of midnight to 5 am GMT seemed reasonable, this might not be appropriate in all areas and the Council should therefore be willing to agree a level of flexibility to meet any clearly defined and specific local needs in relation to part night operation and/or dimming.</p> <p>Owner: Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation</p> <p>Implementation Review Date: May 2010</p> <p>Impact Review Date: January 2011</p> <p>Recommendation 5</p> <p>Before any changes were proposed for a town or village, the parish or town council (District Council for unparished areas) should be invited to express its views on what lights it felt could appropriately be dimmed or turned off. The local Area Forum should also be consulted. The County Council would</p>
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	<p>seek to further these views where possible, but the final decision should always rest with the County Council, as the lighting authority.</p> <p>Owner: Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation</p> <p>Implementation Review Date: May 2010</p> <p>Impact Review Date: January 2011</p> <p>Recommendation 6</p> <p>Once a level of lighting had been agreed by the County Council under (4) and (5) above, the local council (parish or town, but District for unparished areas) could determine that some lighting additional to the County Council decision was required, but it would be expected to reimburse to the ECC the additional costs incurred. It is expected that this power would be used sparingly: ECC should be able to refuse patently unreasonable requests.</p> <p>Owner: Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation</p> <p>Implementation Review Date: May 2010</p> <p>Impact Review Date: January 2011</p> <p>Recommendation 7</p> <p>It was imperative that any changes proposed should be explained to local residents prior to implementation.</p> <p>Owner: Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation</p> <p>Implementation Review Date: May</p>
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	<p>2010</p> <p>Impact Review Date: January 2011</p> <p>Recommendation 8</p> <p>As a matter of policy, the Council should not seek to introduce street lighting in any area where it did not already exist in October 2009, with the exception of new estates and developments, where any lighting should be operated from the start as part of the central management system.</p> <p>Owner: Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation</p> <p>Implementation Review Date: May 2010</p> <p>Impact Review Date: January 2011</p> <p>Recommendation 9</p> <p>The Council should review the level of lighting on all roads which were once bypasses, main routes, or ring roads but which themselves had now been bypassed or supplanted.</p> <p>Owner: Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation</p> <p>Implementation Review Date: May 2010</p> <p>Impact Review Date: January 2011</p>
<p>Finding 7</p> <p>The exception criteria used in the pilot areas had been thought out carefully and had been fair and reasonable.</p>	<p>Recommendation 10</p> <p>The Council should consider adding the following to the pilot area exception criteria:</p>

<p>They should continue in place, subject to some minor modifications to take account of lessons learned during the pilot schemes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - pedestrian routes to and from transport facilities such as railway and Underground stations which have services arriving after midnight; - Strategic Diversion Routes as nominated by the Highways Agency; and - routes where no footpath exists on either side of the road. <p>Owner; Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation</p> <p>Implementation Review Date: May 2010</p> <p>Impact Review Date: January 2011</p>
<p>Finding 8</p> <p>There were a number of complex issues around the use of timers and the types of bulb available for lighting columns. The Committee had been advised of a number of technical developments over recent years and the continuing work being undertaken by the lighting industry to develop new more energy efficient products. It was imperative for the Council's officers to look at all systems available and suggest a way forward.</p> <p>Finding 9</p> <p>The Committee noted with great interest the experiment with modern technology carried out in Great Chesterford. They considered this represented a better way forward than extending the Maldon and Uttlesford pilots in their present form. A wider scale pilot use of this technology might</p>	<p>Recommendation 11</p> <p>The Cabinet Member should prepare and submit to the Cabinet as soon as practicable a Business Case for the introduction of appropriate elements of the new technology into the county. This new technology would include a central computer-managed, wirelessly-connected system which would allow for dimming during (variable) hours of low footfall rather than switch-off at a countywide fixed time, with immediate switch on by request of the emergency services, and should also include resident activated switch-on by PC or text when an event, for instance, was due to finish in dark or dimmed hours.</p> <p>Owner: Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation</p> <p>Implementation Review Date: May 2010</p>

<p>be felt to be required, however, before any clear lessons could be learned.</p>	<p>Impact Review Date: January 2011</p> <p>Recommendation 12</p> <p>If the trial of the new technology in Great Chesterford was deemed insufficient to prepare a viable business case, then the Council should consider implementing a wider trial of it in one or two larger population centres.</p> <p>Owner: Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation</p> <p>Implementation Review Date: May 2010</p> <p>Impact Review ate: January 2011</p>
<p>Finding 10</p> <p>The scrutiny had looked only at lights owned and operated by the Council itself.</p>	<p>Recommendation 13</p> <p>The Council should vigorously encourage local councils and privately owned retail and commercial outlets across the county to review their current levels of street and premises lighting and encourage them to support the County Council in reducing the carbon footprint and cost of lighting overall.</p> <p>Owner: Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation</p> <p>Implementation Review Date: May 2010</p> <p>Impact Review Date: January 2011</p>
<p>Finding 11</p> <p>The Committee had noted that the Council was carrying out a separate review of the lighting levels of its street</p>	

furniture and would welcome any proposals to cut the level of lighting or the replacement of bulb lit equipment with reflective equipment.	
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INTRODUCTION

In 2007, the County Council implemented a pilot scheme whereby:-

- (a) from 20 February 2007 certain street lights in the Maldon District owned and operated by the County Council were switched off between midnight and 5 am GMT; and
- (b) from 2 April 2007 certain street lights in the Uttlesford District (excluding the Saffron Walden town area) were switched off between midnight and 5 am GMT, with some other street lights being switched off between 1 am and 5 am GMT

This action took place after a consultation period in the two districts. An exception process was agreed in advance of implementation and in the light of a detailed risk assessment. The exception criteria was that all street lights would be altered to part night operation unless covered by the following exceptions:-

- (1) Major lit inter urban dual carriageway traffic routes.
- (2) Conflict sites (e.g. roundabouts) lit by columns greater than 6 metres high.
- (3) Streets where street lighting installed for accident remedial measures.
- (4) Town centre development where there is one or more of the following features (a) CCTV sites; (b) high proportion of high security premises; (c) high crime risk; and (d) high concentration of people at night, such as transport interchanges, nightclubs, etc.
- (5) Main approaches to areas defined in (4) above where there is a risk of development between residential and commercial/industrial (i.e. not exclusively residential).
- (6) Sites where the police demonstrate that there will be an increase in crime if the lights are switched off.
- (7) Remote footpaths and alleys linking residential streets.
- (8) Where there is a statutory requirement.
- (9) Where the configuration of street lighting columns is considered excessive, consideration is to be given to removing one in two lights, with the remaining lights left on in full night operation.

It was always intended that this Committee would play a major role in reviewing the pilot scheme before the Council reached any decisions on how to proceed

countywide. That being the case, a lengthy preparation period was possible and, as soon as the 2009 Council elections were over, plans were put in place to seek views.

The Committee's Governance Officer and a senior reporter from the major newspaper chain in the county liaised closely and a full page article on the subject appeared well in advance of the Committee's meeting. This actively invited contributions from the public and gave the Governance Officer's contact details. All Parish/Town Councils were contacted via the Council's Parish Information Co-ordination Officer and a wide range of local organisations were also approached. These were:

- all County Councillors
- all Borough and District Councils in Essex
- the Institute of Lighting Engineers
- Essex Police
- Essex Fire and Rescue Service
- Council for Preservation of Rural England
- Rural Community Council for Essex
- Royal Automobile Club
- Friends of the Earth
- Essex Blind Charity

The Committee also looked at what was happening in other local authorities across the UK. This showed that this was an active issue in many areas, particularly shire counties.

It was made clear from the outset that the Committee would welcome views on all aspects of the proposals, including public safety, crime rates, the perception of crime, financial considerations and environmental concerns. The Committee made it known that it had no preconceived ideas.

The Committee was delighted to receive 90 representations from

County Councillors (10)
District/Borough Councils (3)
Town and Parish Councils (29)
Organisations (7)
Individuals (41)

The Committee's task was to consider the evidence and make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Highways, Councillor Norman Hume. In preliminary discussions between the Chairman and Councillor Hume, the latter made it clear that he expected the Committee to do a thorough job, to leave no stone unturned, and to consider solutions, no matter how radical, that would suit the communities of Essex. The Chairman made it clear to Councillor Hume and in his opening

remarks that the Committee would not be fettered by political or other considerations, and that it would be open to its members to recommend cessation of the pilots equally as continuing energy saving schemes.

On this occasion the Committee comprised Councillors Christopher Pond (Chairman), Ray Howard (Vice Chairman), Susan Barker, Margaret Fisher, Gerard McEwen, Iris Pummell, Elizabeth Webster and Janet Whitehouse

WITNESS SESSIONS

A number of individuals expressed a wish to come to speak to the Committee and it was pleased to facilitate this. In addition, the Committee actively sought out witnesses who could speak on the wider aspects of the pilot scheme.

A whole day was set aside on 18 September 2009, when the Committee heard from 11 persons. Two further witnesses were heard on 16 October. A summary of the comments made by the witnesses is set out in the annex to this report (all were shown their comments at the drafting stage of this report and agreed that their comments were recorded accurately).

The witnesses were (in alphabetical order):-

Mr J Abbott
Mr A Baggott
Mr R Bass
Mr J Harrison
Mr M Heard
Mr C March
Mr F Mussard
Mr Oldfield
Mr N Parry
Mr D Paul
Mr J Roberts
Mr K Rogers
Mr J Wrigley

Both witness sessions were webcast live and are archived on the Council's website (www.essex.gov.uk). There was also substantial coverage in the local press and on BBC local radio, whose reporter interviewed some of the witnesses.

The Committee was very pleased at the standard of submissions made, which were cogent and well argued. Consultees also had a perception of the bigger picture and acknowledged that an element of compromise would be required.

The Committee also considered the whole range of written submissions made. The issues arising from these were as summarised below:-

In favour of continuing/expanding the pilots (turning off street lights at midnight)

- Has not led to any increase in levels of crime or number of violent incidents.
- Has created savings by using less energy and has lowered level of carbon emissions.
- Has led to less light pollution and an opportunity to see the starlit sky.
- Many rural areas have no street lighting in any case and do not feel disadvantaged by that.
- There are adverse effects from artificial lighting on sleep patterns and health.
- There is no evidence that having premises lit up is a deterrent to burglars.
- In a number of areas in the past it was normal practice to turn off lights during the night and this had no impact on crime levels or inconvenience to local residents.
- People who live in the countryside should not, and do not necessarily, expect street lighting to be provided.

In favour of abandoning the experiment/ keeping street lights turned on all night

- There is a fear of crime levels increasing. In some areas this has happened.
- Certain groups, particularly the elderly, young people and females, feel particularly vulnerable in unlit areas.
- Turning off lights has led to an increase in anti social behaviour and vandalism.
- There are concerns at road safety being compromised, particularly at junctions.
- Individual residents will feel obliged to provide their own external lighting, increasing their own costs and negating any overall savings and carbon reductions.
- By using energy saving bulbs, costs could be reduced without the need to turn off lights.

- There is no evidence of savings either actual or projected, being used to cut the level of council tax and the Council could face extra costs by leaving itself open to legal actions should death or injury be caused in an area where lights were turned off.
- Whatever the Council's best intentions, the contribution towards cutting global warming is minimal.

Specific issues

- Could every alternate/third/etc light be switched off, retaining some light but still cutting costs and emissions?
- Will any savings be reinvested in specific schemes or just returned to general funds?
- Could the time lights are turned off be made later (say 1 or 1.30 am) as midnight seems too early?
- Could there be a flexible turn off time – in some urban areas establishments are open until past midnight whereas in many rural areas none would be open after 11 pm? Are timers reliable enough to guarantee that defined turn of times can be kept to?
- Estates in a number of areas were specifically designed with internal alleyways and walkways which would remain lit throughout the hours of darkness.
- Some areas are on either the main line railway routes or Underground routes and have large numbers of people arriving after midnight.
- In some areas there are a large number of people who need to rise early because of work commitments (the area near Stansted Airport was mentioned specifically).
- Will different criteria be applicable to areas without footpaths, which might be considered to be more dangerous if not lit up?
- Can or should the County Council seek to encourage other organisations to follow a similar policy to itself? Examples are the number of retail and commercial premises that are lit up all night but are not open for business. Is the Council working in a concerted manner?

- Is the Council content that whatever policy it adopts meets all legal requirements about the highway being lit? Does the Council have any proposals to turn off traffic lights at night?
- It is important that the exception criteria are clear and fair. There are many individual circumstances which need to be taken into account and a blanket turn off policy seems unfair and unworkable.
- A number of parish councils pay for and operate a number of their own street lights. In these cases the Council will have to agree the overall policy for that area – e.g. it would be unreasonable to have lights on in 75% of a village and not in the other 25%. If the parish council is the main operator would it make sense to transfer all lights to the parish council's ownership and allow a local decision on the level and hours of lighting?

Finally, the Committee considered a number of documents comprising:

- Executive Decisions setting out in detail the arrangements for the two pilot schemes in Essex.
- Details of the scheme operated by Gloucestershire County Council.
- Written views of the Upper Bridge Road Community Group (who had hoped to attend and give oral evidence but were unavailable to do so).
- Statistical data on the fear of crime, compiled for the Local Area Agreement.
- Summary of Home Office Research study 251 – effects of improved street lighting on crime.
- Press cuttings on various schemes across the UK and in Europe.

The Chairman of the Committee and the Governance Officer read through all submissions made, which have been retained on file. These have been deposited in the County Council filing system and will be deposited in due course in the Essex Record Office. They were used to frame questions to the witnesses and to raise points of fact with officers.

The Committee was grateful to all consultees for their input.

FOLLOW UP SESSION

After all the witnesses had been heard, and written comments considered, the Committee discussed a wide range of issues with Councillor Norman Hume (Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation) and Mr Lawrence McKeogh (County Roads Manager). As a result of the previous evidence gathering exercise and papers distributed at the meeting, these issues centred on the following topics:

- Was the Cabinet Member convinced that there was a legal basis for turning off lights which was not open to legal challenge?

- Had the Cabinet Member sought views on the experience of other local authorities who had implemented changes to their lighting policy, and what had been the outcomes of these changes?
- Had the Council saved money as a result of the pilot schemes and how much? Had any savings been re invested in other Council services or returned to Council Tax payers?
- What views did the Cabinet Member have on the types of lighting available and did the Council have any proposals to change the type of bulbs used?
- What was the basis of the Great Chesterford experiment (*Telensa*), and how might it be economically and effectively extended? Did the Cabinet member consider this was feasible in the short term?
- What technical and safety issues might arise should every alternate light be turned off? Was this considered dangerous practice on major highways due to a mix of light and shade?
- What influence did the Council have over 'other' lighting such as parish council operated systems and lighting in private commercial and retail premises?
- What research had the Cabinet Member carried out in respect of actual crime figures, the perception of crime and road safety, and what were the outcomes of that research?
- Had there been any proposals to extend the pilot scheme to other districts or was the Cabinet Member now seeking to determine a stance for the whole county?
- Had the Cabinet Member any medical evidence about the effects of street lighting on the health of Essex residents?
- Would/could the Cabinet Member consider proposals by third parties to meet the cost of street lights it would otherwise turn off? Could the decision in effect be delegated to parish and town councils (districts in unparished areas) with that council (after a transitional period) making up the cost beyond minimum standards?
- Was the Cabinet Member committed to a midnight – 5 am down time for any technical reasons? Were the part-night timers on the Councils lights able to be changed easily? What was the nature of the unmetered supply contract in relation to part-night switch off, and when did it expire?

- Were there any legal or operational reasons why different practices could not operate in urban and rural areas? Or in different districts? Or within districts?
- Was the Cabinet Member satisfied that the exception criteria chosen were appropriate at the time and still remained so?
- Was there any co-ordinated action nationally to cut back on the amount of lighting for environmental reasons?

The Committee then posed some questions about particular circumstances within the pilot areas.

This follow up session was also web cast live and is available for perusal on the County Council website.

The Committee also considered the Joint Monitoring Group report presented by Mr McKeogh, and his Power Point demonstration to the Committee. These have been retained with the file of papers for this scrutiny.

CONCLUSIONS

Having considered the evidence, the Committee decided to record 11 findings and make 13 recommendations. The reasons for reaching these decisions are set out below and they are also set out collectively in the Executive Summary included in this report, alongside timescales for action. Whilst the whole Committee agreed this response, it was acknowledged by some Members that some of their constituents and local councils in their area had expressed differing views and they wished that this be recorded.

It was clear to the Committee that views on the subject were strongly held and that there was clearly no right or wrong answer which would satisfy all shades of opinion. It had to consider some firm factual data, such as crime rates and the cost of lighting, and some very difficult to quantify but equally relevant matters, such as fear of darkness and of crime.

The Committee's view was that, as the lighting authority, the County Council had to be seen to take the lead role in the county. Whilst consultation with other parties would be important, the final decisions must rest with the County Council. The Cabinet Member had sought the Committee's views and it wanted to give a clear steer to him as to what it saw as the appropriate way forward.

It acknowledged that the advice we gave to the Cabinet Member might disappoint many people. However, the Council had a clear view on handling environmental concerns and the Committee reiterated the Council's policy that cutting emissions and being a national leader in doing so was of such importance that it should be

the paramount issue it should take into account. It specifically rejected the view that nothing should be done because the amount of emissions to be saved was, in a global context, relatively small.

Therefore, the advice the Committee decided to offer was based on the principle that the level of lighting in the county could and should be reduced, and that wherever possible, new technology should be the means of achieving targets in this field.

Whilst the final decisions rest with the Cabinet Member, it is the Committee's intention to revisit the subject after an appropriate period (not sooner than 12 months) to check on progress.

Findings	Recommendations to the Cabinet member
<p>(1) It was clear Council policy that a reduction in CO₂ emissions directly attributable to the County Council should be sought, and the Committee thought that greater weight should be given in publicity to this than to making financial savings, even though the two effectively marched in tandem.</p> <p>(2) Financial savings should lead either to a cut in Council Tax levels or to money being redistributed to other schemes of benefit to Essex residents.</p>	<p>(1) The Council should aim to achieve savings of up to 70% of the current carbon emission footprint and thus of the lighting energy bill, principally through the use of new technology, the negotiation of contracts related to actual rather than unmetered usage, and also the turning off of any unnecessary street lights. This should be set as a target to be achieved within a set timescale (possibly three years).</p>
<p>(3) The pilot schemes had been running long enough for data to be collected and analysed and for viable conclusions to be reached.</p> <p>(4) On the basis of finding (3), no more similar pilot schemes were required.</p> <p>(5) On the evidence heard, the Committee did not believe there was any overwhelming reason why the pilot schemes might not, with an element of fine tuning, be rolled out across all 12 Essex districts. However, trying to implement a 'one size fits all' approach in every part of such a large and</p>	<p>(2) The Council should implement the programme to reduce the emissions and cost of ECC and local council owned and operated street lighting across the whole county.</p> <p>(3) Any changes should be implemented across an agreed timescale. Given the location of the pilot areas, the Council might decide that a swathe across the centre of the county (to include, therefore, towns the size of Chelmsford and Braintree) should be the first area to be reviewed and converted to new technology, such that its operation in a range of</p>

<p>diverse county as Essex would not be possible, given its mix of urban, suburban, and rural areas. The advent of new technology meant also that a more adjustable and intelligent method of advancing street lighting carbon savings, and thus cost, was available. This could be applied across the County, and to an even greater level than had been achieved with the midnight switch off in the pilot areas.</p> <p>(6) Whilst the solution should apply to all 12 districts, any attempt to introduce practices countywide in the same timescale would be extremely difficult in logistical terms and costly in capital terms. Therefore, the Committee favoured a phased, and as much as possible, an agreed, approach to the changes.</p>	<p>settlements wider than that in the pilots could be monitored.</p> <p>(4) Whilst a normal turn off time of midnight to 5 am GMT seemed reasonable, this might not be appropriate in all areas and the Council should therefore be willing to agree a level of flexibility to meet any clearly defined and specific local needs in relation to part night operation and/or dimming.</p> <p>(5) Before any changes were proposed for a town or village, the parish or town council (District Council for unparished areas) should be invited to express its views on what lights it felt could appropriately be dimmed or turned off. The local Area Forum should also be consulted. The County Council would seek to further these views where possible, but the final decision should always rest with the County Council, as the lighting authority.</p> <p>(6) Once a level of lighting had been agreed by the County Council under (4) and (5) above, the local council (parish or town, but District for unparished areas) could determine that some lighting additional to the County Council decision was required, but it would be expected to reimburse to ECC the additional costs incurred. It is expected that this power would be used sparingly: ECC should be able to refuse patently unreasonable requests.</p> <p>(7) It was imperative that any changes proposed should be explained to local residents prior to implementation.</p> <p>(8) As a matter of policy, the Council should not seek to introduce street lighting in any area where it did not</p>
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	<p>already exist in October 2009, with the exception of new estates and developments, where any lighting should be operated from the start as part of the central management system.</p> <p>(9) The Council should review the level of lighting on all roads which were once bypasses, main routes, or ring roads but which themselves had now been bypassed or supplanted.</p>
<p>(7) The exception criteria used in the pilot areas had been thought out carefully and had been fair and reasonable. They should continue in place, subject to some minor modifications to take account of lessons learned during the pilot schemes.</p>	<p>(10) The Council should consider adding the following to the pilot area exception criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - pedestrian routes to and from transport facilities such as railway and Underground stations which have services arriving after midnight; - Strategic Diversion Routes as nominated by the Highways Agency; and - routes where no footpath exists on either side of the road.
<p>(8) There were a number of complex issues around the use of timers and the types of bulb available for lighting columns. The Committee had been advised of a number of technical developments over recent years and the continuing work being undertaken by the lighting industry to develop new more energy efficient products. It was imperative for the Council's officers to look at all systems available and suggest a way forward.</p> <p>(9) The Committee noted with great interest the experiment with modern technology carried out in Great Chesterford. They considered this</p>	<p>(11) The Cabinet Member should prepare and submit to the Cabinet as soon as practicable a Business Case for the introduction of appropriate elements of the new technology into the county. This new technology would include a central computer-managed, wirelessly-connected system which would allow for dimming during (variable) hours of low footfall rather than switch-off at a countywide fixed time, with immediate switch on by request of the emergency services, and should also include resident activated switch-on by PC or text when an event, for instance, was</p>

represented a better way forward than extending the Maldon and Uttlesford pilots in their present form. A wider scale pilot use of this technology might be felt to be required, however, before any clear lessons could be learned.	<p>due to finish in dark or dimmed hours.</p> <p>(12) If the trial of the new technology in Great Chesterford was deemed insufficient to prepare a viable business case, then the Council should consider implementing a wider trial of it in one or two larger population centres.</p>
(10) The scrutiny had looked only at lights owned and operated by the Council itself.	<p>(13) The Council should vigorously encourage local councils and privately owned retail and commercial outlets across the county to review their current levels of street and premises lighting and encourage them to support the County Council in reducing the carbon footprint and cost of lighting overall.</p>
(11) The Committee had noted that the Council was carrying out a separate review of the lighting levels of its street furniture and would welcome any proposals to cut the level of lighting or the replacement of bulb lit equipment with reflective equipment.	

Summary of comments made by witnesses

Witnesses Speaking In Favour of Having Street Lights Turned On all night

Mr. C March, presented information to the Committee as an individual from Basildon.

Mr. March considered that the scheme should not be introduced across Essex for the following reasons:

- The two rural pilot studies were not representative of the whole county, and urban areas had different needs.
- It would produce a minimal effect on
 - climate change
 - energy saving
 - budget saving

For public safety reasons, Mr. March considered it would be irresponsible to introduce such a scheme as it would lead to increases in the following areas:

- crime
- numbers of accidents
- fear of crime in vulnerable groups
- numbers of sexual assaults
- Imposed curfew on many people

In answer to Members' questions, Mr. March referred the Committee to two official studies, undertaken by David Bellamy and Dr. Kate Paynter, which gave evidence and outcome statistics from previous schemes. These he had sent to Members previously.

A number of alternatives, such as turning off every other street light, the use of new technology, low sodium bulbs or switching off some or all lights on some major roads, were discussed.

When asked by Members whether a compromise would be acceptable, Mr. March considered that all lights should stay on in Basildon but perhaps would consider a compromise after hearing the comments of the Institute of Lighting Engineers, whose representative would be attending this Committee during its afternoon session.

Mr. M Heard presented information to the Committee as a concerned resident who lived in the Maldon District pilot scheme area, where the lights were switched off at night.

Mr. Heard advised the Committee that he objected to having the lights turned off at night for the following reasons:

- Essex County Council had a duty to protect the public.
- Problems had increased since the lights had been turned off. He had suffered criminal damage on three occasions and was aware of other criminal acts in the road. Mr. Heard considered these crimes and other crimes could have been prevented if the lights had been switched on; the road was a through route which meant that non residents passed though the road to go to other places. It was difficult to identify perpetrators or witness anything in the darkness.
- Elderly people feared this particularly.
- More residents were installing personal security lights and he questioned whether there was an energy saving in that.
- Concerns for the safety of young girls, especially at the weekends, walking home in the dark from late night venues, as there were many establishments that were open after midnight.
- Confusion over conflicting information given in Police press releases, about crime rates in the pilot area; firstly supporting the switch off on the basis that it had no affect and then reporting a rise in crime.
- There seemed little action from the local police.

In answer to Members' questions Mr. Heard advised the Committee that he had chosen to live in the road three years previously, as it had a good reputation for being a safe place to live with no crime. His experience was that crime had risen since the introduction of the scheme two years ago.

Mr. Heard explained to the Committee that another street within the pilot area had suffered similar experiences. The lights were switched back on after the residents campaigned via the local press and he wondered if this could be repeated in his road.

When asked by Members whether a compromise would be acceptable, Mr. Heard advised the Committee that he preferred that the lights be switched back on, but understood the need to save energy and budgets. He considered that a 2 am until daylight switch off, or switching off every other bulb, might be acceptable.

Mr. Oldfield, a resident in the Saffron Walden pilot scheme area, presented information to the Committee and acted as a spokesperson for over 1,000 local residents who had signed a petition asking for the pilot scheme to be terminated. Mrs. J. Swatton supported his comments.

The Committee was advised the canvass of local opinion had begun two months after the pilot started; and had been repeated 18 months later. This had resulted in

a petition containing 1,000 signatures being handed to the local council. Further to this, an online petition had been signed by a further 600, mostly younger people.

Speaking on a personal level as a resident of Winstanley Road (where 90% of its residents had signed the petition), Mr. Oldfield advised the Committee that crime had increased dramatically since the lights had been turned off, with four burglaries occurring within six months. Residents were now considering erecting personal security lighting and the incidents had resulted in the following issues:

- A rise in the fear in crime.
- People being fearful in their own homes.
- People feeling as if they had a curfew, especially disabled people who felt they could not go out at night.
- People felt as if they had lost a public service (i.e. had paid taxes but had now lost their lighting).
- Fear for personal safety.
- Danger of tripping over uneven pavements in the dark.
- Increased level of car crimes.

Mr. Oldfield considered the reported £20,000 saving in the Saffron Walden pilot area, which equated to 29 pence per person, and the saving made in the carbon footprint was negligible when compared to the resulting public safety issues.

In answer to questions from Members, the following responses were made:

Mr. Oldfield explained that Winstanley Road was located slightly out of the town centre and was a main feeder road to a nearby housing estate.

Having lights did not increase crime, whilst having no lights increased crime as offenders could not be recognised. Police statistics showed a fall in the crime rate; however the main issue was that residents, whether the reason was founded or not, were fearful and had started to change their lifestyles.

When asked by Members whether a compromise would be acceptable, Mr. Oldfield advised the Committee that he accepted that there could be alternatives but preferred to have some light rather than no lights. Every other light being switched off, energy efficient bulbs or savings made in non residential areas, such as motorway lighting, industrial estate lighting and council owned and operated depots, could be a compromise.

Mr K Rogers, a resident of Wivenhoe, presented information to the Committee on behalf of Wivenhoe Community Safety Neighbourhood Watch.

Mr. Rogers introduced himself to the Committee as being a Wivenhoe Town Councillor responsible for community safety police liaison. He was also Chair of

the Wivenhoe Community Safety Neighbourhood Watch. He outlined his personal qualifications and experience to the Committee as being:

- MA Criminology (Essex University 2008).
- Fellow of the Institute of International Security.
- Member Institute Risk and Safety Management.
- Editorial Board:- 'Professional Security' 12 years.
- 'Protecting Citizens Worldwide' (PCW) 3 years.
- Was an author of various papers relating to security-community safety issues in Security and academic publications, had lectured on Risk/Security Community Safety, Plymouth (MOD), Exeter University (MBA), the Home Office National Crime Prevention Centre and Leicester University and to various other groups.
- He was a former active CID police officer who had been awarded the Exemplary Good Conduct Medal.
- Had been employed in security risk management in various industries and had advised senior government Home Office minister on security at his country estate.

Mr. Rogers advised the Committee that his submission pertained mostly to Wivenhoe Town and the surrounding University area. However he considered it would be applicable to other areas of Essex.

Whilst understanding that in today's climate that various functions had to be examined by Essex County Council to ensure cost effectiveness, Mr. Rogers put forward the argument to the Committee that safety of the individual was paramount and had to be treated as a priority. Reduction of lighting would for many individuals undoubtedly create a 'fear of crime' thereby reducing their quality of life.

The Committee was advised that, according to a research document produced by the Home Office, low illumination is a major factor in contributing to night time fatalities on all classes of road. It has also been argued 'The public are in favour of street lighting as a way of improving road safety. In addition to this, an Automobile Association (AA) survey had revealed that the most experienced drivers were aware that driving at night was more dangerous. Mr. Rogers asked the Committee to note that only a quarter of all travel by car drivers was between the hours of 7pm and 8am, yet this period of driving accounted for 40% of fatal and serious injuries.

Experience had shown that improved street lighting led to improved road safety in addition to reducing crime and the fear of crime.

Mr. Rogers advised the Committee that personal experience as a police officer had shown that serious sexual assaults, theft of lorry loads, attacks and robbery were more prevalent at night in poorly lit areas.

The Committee was asked to consider the late opening hours of nightclubs, not only in town centres, but also on the fringes of a town. With later opening hours people were on the streets often until 3am in the morning. These people required the protection of good lighting from traffic and criminals. Mr. Rogers doubted the usefulness of CCTV in poorly lit areas, as good images may not be captured.

Whilst it was accepted that for past years Wivenhoe was considered to be the safest town in Essex, Mr. Rogers considered that this would change without street lighting, as it would encourage crime.

In particular Mr. Rogers asked the Committee to consider the 6,000 students at the local University, many staying for late night events. Some 500 students resided in Wivenhoe (population 12,000), and increasing numbers of students were visiting the town. Personal experience as a cyclist had shown that the journey to Wivenhoe from the University was known to be hazardous. In particular, the Greensted Tunnel had no lighting, and student's preferred to risk crossing the busy highway rather than use the dark tunnel. Employees of the University, such as cleaners and maintenance staff, walk and cycle to the University from 04.45 am. These employees deserve good lighting. There is an urgent requirement for street lighting during the hours of darkness.

Lastly the Committee was asked to consider the night time economy of Wivenhoe, and the many good quality restaurants which attracted many evening customers on Friday and Saturday in particular. A reduction in lighting could create a reduction in customers. There was also late working at the business centre and late local community functions such as the Mayor's charity, etc.

In summary Mr. Rogers advised the Committee that there is considerable evidence that no lighting and/or poor lighting created a fear of crime and interfered with the quality of life. The various communities deserved good lighting on our streets.

When asked by Members whether a compromise would be acceptable, Mr. Rogers advised the Committee that he appreciated the need for Essex County Council to make savings, save energy and reduce carbon emissions. However, students at the university did not want lights turned off at midnight. Turning lights off between 2. and 4 am might provide an alternative.

Mr A Baggott presented information to the Committee speaking in his capacity as the Basildon District Councillor for Pitsea North West.

Mr. Baggott invited the Committee to consider the following issues before any moves were made to switch off residential lighting in the Basildon Town area:

- The 'drive though' design of many residential areas made them reliant on lighting in residential 'rat run' alleyways.

- Members of the public attending local Councillor surgeries had expressed the desire for lights to stay on.
- Door to door canvassing during local elections had revealed that people were frightened to come to their front door, and commonly requested extra lighting.
- In some parts of Basildon manhole covers had been removed illegally and there were poor pavements in some areas.
- Some areas are very dark and could do with more lighting.
- NHS services would not easily find some addresses in Pitsea if there were no lights, due to the complicated layout of the road structure.

Mr. Baggott advised the Committee that an Essex County Council study had shown that Pitsea was considered to be an area of high deprivation which had a high rate of crime and anti-social behaviour. The Crime and Disorder Partnership had seen fit to increase lighting in the area and this had resulted in a significant reduction in crime, especially car crime.

In answer to questions from Members, the following responses were made:-

Mr. Baggott considered it was important to get night light for the right areas. Some areas had too little and some areas, such as the Five Links, too much, and he suggested to the Committee that a light mapping exercise on the town centre and leisure parks should be carried out in Basildon before introducing any night time lighting reduction scheme in residential areas.

When asked by Members whether compromises would be acceptable, Mr. Baggott advised the Committee that, besides the mapping exercise previously mentioned, he considered that main roads could easily use alternative lighting arrangements and there could be a more effective use of existing lighting; for example often there were lights on during the daytime, and this was unnecessary.

Mr. J Harrison presented information to the Committee as an individual from Heybridge.

Mr. Harrison introduced himself to the Committee as being a Heybridge Parish Councillor who had 50 years experience as a Chartered Engineer.

Mr. Harrison advised the Committee that the subject of the night time lighting reduction pilot areas had been presented and discussed at the Essex County Council's Mid Essex and West Essex Area Forums. On the grounds that not enough time had elapsed between the start of the pilot and the production of the report, Mr. Harrison questioned the validity of statistics contained in the Uttlesford pilot area presentation, which had stated that there had been a reduction in crime. He considered variations in crime statistics had been small and it was too early to be able to accurately report these statistics.

With regard to the reported level of savings to be made from introducing the schemes, Mr. Harrison considered that that it would need a significant majority of the UK to introduce the scheme to be able to make effective savings. Mr. Harrison suggested that, unless a significant number of the population agreed to the schemes, people in Essex would feel victimised (why us in Essex?).

Mr. Harrison raised concerns that there seemed to be confusion over which lights would be switched off and which would remain on. He explained that, in some areas, lights had a number of owners. Some could be owned by the Parish Council, and some were operated by the Highways Agency and some by Essex County Council; there were also lights in private roads to consider.

Before introducing the scheme to a wider area, Mr. Harrison asked the Committee to consider the following issues:

- The rise in the fear of crime especially in the elderly and female population.
- That crime was particularly significant to those who had already been victims of crime.

When asked by Members whether a compromise would be acceptable, Mr. Harrison advised the Committee that the original equipment was fairly unsophisticated and now there were more up to date systems which could be introduced. However, he considered a 50% reduction might be an acceptable alternative.

Councillor F Mussard attended on behalf of Ingatestone and Fryerning Parish Council. Councillor Mussard informed the Committee that the Parish Council appreciated the cost benefit of turning the lights off but it had reservations for the following public safety reasons:

- The High Street was used as a diversionary route when there were incidents on the A12 dual carriageway. Concerns were raised that, if this occurred during the night, main road lights and the lamps illuminating road signs would be switched off.
- Parts of Ingatestone dated from Norman and Roman times. There was limited lighting and in some places there were narrow footpaths or no footpaths whatsoever. Concerns were raised for pedestrians and school children attending the Anglo-European School.
- Several establishments had now been granted extended licences. This meant that people could be on the streets between one and two o'clock in the morning. Concerns were raised regarding people going home in the dark, especially if the narrow main road was being used as an A12 diversionary route at that time.
- Ingatestone was in the commuter belt and was on the main railway line to London. The last train to arrive in Ingatestone was currently at

01.21 in the morning. If lights were to be switched off there were concerns for the public who might be walking home in the dark.

Should any proposals to turn off lights be pursued, Councillor Mussard considered it to be vital that a firm and fair set of exception criteria were in place.

Witnesses Speaking In Favour Of Having Street Lights Turned Off part-night

Mr. J Abbott a Parish and District Councillor, presented information to the Committee as an individual from Rivenhall.

Mr. Abbott advised the Committee that he had a long term interest in the environment and an interest and a degree in astronomy.

Mr. Abbott supported the principle of the pilot schemes which he considered to have been successful, but accepted the need for lights in some locations such as at major road junctions. He outlined the benefits of the scheme as follows:

- Saving of energy/fossil fuels.
- Reduction in climate changes /CO2 emissions.
- Saving money.
- Saving the environment and restoring rural tranquillity.
- Restores the effects of excessive lighting on wildlife.
- Restores the ability to see the night sky.

In answer to Members questions the following responses where made.

Mr. Abbott advised the Committee that recorded crime had fallen in the pilot areas. He considered that most crime was related to drug addiction and that there was a false association between no lighting and a rise in crime. Mr. Abbott considered that the fear of the dark was perhaps an irrational fear and was not backed up by statistics. He then cited the fact that there had been crime in the lane near to Witham railway station, a theft of lead from St. Nicolas Church and the two recent murders in Norwich City centre, all of which were well lit areas. Mr. Abbott put forward the suggestion that criminals also needed to have light to commit crimes. With regard to evidence gathering, CCTV cameras worked on infra red and did not need bright lights to capture images.

Members of the public could use inexpensive low energy security lights should they choose to do so.

With regard to public access and personal safety, Mr. Abbott supported lower lighting levels at midnight throughout the year as this was when it was quiet at night. Alternatively lights could be left on where there were late night licenses were in operation.

Mr. Abbott considered that there should be local consultation regarding the introduction of any schemes. He advised the Committee that there could be additional areas (other than residential areas) where lighting could be turned off, and put forward a number of alternative options these included the following:

- Asking supermarkets to power down when closed, by turning down shop lighting and turning off car park lighting when not open during the night.
- Asking industrial estates to power down (as above).
- Asking shopping villages/estates to power down (as above).

With regard to astronomy, Mr. Abbott advised the Committee that the membership of clubs and societies ran into tens of thousands of people across the country. The night sky was 'dying' and 80% of children could no longer see the Milky Way.

When asked to consider what the estimated £1 million savings per year from introducing the street lighting reduction could be spent upon, Mr. Abbott suggested the following schemes:

- Direct security benefits.
- Better fencing.
- Better security measures on buildings such as parish halls, etc.

Mr. D. Paul presented information to the Committee as a resident from Great. Notley, where the lights were currently switched on. Mr. Paul advised the Committee that he currently lived in a private road which had 20 street lights. He preferred the lights to be turned off at night for the following reasons:

- Improve Environmental issues as it was our children's legacy to conserve energy.
- Improve Health Issues.
- Improve the quality of natural night time light (this had disappeared).
- Crime was low in the area, and there appeared to be little or no evidence that the crime rate went up in unlit areas.
- He preferred to sleep in a darkened room, as he considered there was an intrinsic quality to less lighting.

With regard to environmental issues, Mr. Paul reminded the Committee that turning off street lights late at night used to be commonplace and asked Essex County Council to set a good example to other authorities.

Mr. Paul introduced and circulated a map to the Committee. The satellite picture of Gt. Britain and Europe at night showed that Gt. Britain was using more lights than the other countries. Members questioned whether this was because Gt. Britain was more densely populated than much of Europe.

With regard to health issues, Mr. Paul introduced and circulated a health study undertaken in America by Professor George Brainard, a neuroscientist who proposed that exposure to excessive artificial light at night may be responsible for rises in certain cancers.

When asked by Members whether a compromise would be acceptable, Mr. Paul advised the Committee that he considered that there should be local consultation before introducing any schemes. Personally he preferred that residential lights be switched off, but would consider alternatives schemes such as:

- A 2 am to daylight switch off, or switching off every other bulb.
- Many street lights for traffic roads could be cut back.
- More intelligent lighting.

Witnesses speaking about the subject in general

Mr. N Parry presented information to the Committee in his capacity as Technical Services Manager, Institute of Lighting Engineers (ILE).

Mr. Parry advised the Committee that the ILE had some 2,500 members, including members from local authorities and manufacturers and was established in 1924. The main aim of the Institute was to establish excellence in lighting. Lighting needed to meet British Standard code number 54899 and the European standard CEN 13201, although this European standard was currently being updated.

The Committee was advised that England was renowned for fully implementing standards where other countries might take more flexible views. With regard to main roads, it was important to keep a uniform standard. The busiest roads had the highest number and highest volume of lights. Balfour Beatty has a 30 year lighting replacement plan for the M25 motorway. New technology in the form of Light Emitting Diode (LED) lighting would be introduced by year 3 of the plan. These LED lights could be dimmed during low traffic times but would still meet British Standards. Once introduced, these could produce savings of several millions of pounds by reducing energy.

Mr. Parry advised the Committee that there were four benefits associated with having street lighting, as follows:

- Traffic accident reduction, as set out in the AA study.
- Reduction in the fear of crime and increased crime prevention (as set out in the Kate Paynter Study).
- Lighting stimulated the night time economy with people being more confident to go out at night time.
- Good lighting supported sustainable transport with people being more confident to use public transport if stations/terminals and surrounding exits were well lit.

The Committee was advised that the need to conserve energy was a UK wide problem and that the country needed to produce an 80% reduction of carbon by 2050.

Mr. Parry advised the Committee that the human eye could not cope very well with repetitively being in light and then shade and it was of great importance to maintain uniformity. For this reason Mr. Parry considered the worst course of action would be to switch off every other light/lamp. With the right lamps 20% uniformity could be achieved, thus lowering energy cost and producing the required savings.

Mr. Parry then outlined some of the many technical changes and advancements made in the industry over the last five years, which included the following:

- Benefits of using white light which can operate at a lower level and give better cover than average lights (this technology took into account how the human eye sees).
- LED technology, allowing dimmable bulbs (down to 20% from 100%).
- Sensors on individual lights – these go up in intensity when people pass near to them.
- Central management system for all lights which used wireless technology, which allowed each individual light to be controlled.
- Technology which allowed lights to warm up quicker.
- Sensors for lighting in offices; these could lower lighting when offices were not in use.

The Committee was advised that more environmentally friendly LED lighting was suitable for residential areas but would be expensive (at least double the cost) to install, so benefits would take a time to be realised. There were also technical issues which needed to be addressed before widespread introduction. Work was being carried out to resolve the problems.

Mr. Parry outlined how new Central Lighting Management Systems could wirelessly control lighting levels and outlined to the Committee the Leicester Square (London) project where lights were controlled according to public activity in the area. The Committee was advised that it would be possible to have one central management system for the whole of the county. Some authorities, including Cornwall, Surrey, Hants, Sussex and Southampton, had signed up to such schemes.

In answer to questions from Members the following responses were made:

In Europe most lighting worked in a different way to that in England.

With regard to lights being switched on during the day, currently lamps had a built in fail safe mode (switched to 'on'). Therefore, when problems occurred, the lights would stay on during daytime until the problem was resolved.

With regard to pollution of the night sky, sodium lighting produced 20% of upward facing light, the newer technology white lights would produce a greatly reduced upward light (0-1%). Lamp styles and shapes to gain the best outcomes were still being developed.

With regard to dimming of lights, SON lights could be dimmed from 100% to 20%, COSMO lights from 100% to 50% and LED lights from 100% to 0%.

With regard to how often lamps needed to be changed, long SON lamps lasted for up to four years; COSMO up to three/four years; and LED up to 150,000 hours (potentially equivalent to 35-40 years). It would be possible to change from SON lamps by using existing lamp columns and replacing just the lantern. A second benefit of this would be that the new lamps should be able to cope with columns at 60 metres apart, (so approximately halving the number of existing columns).

Mr. J Wrigley presented information to the Committee in his capacity as a Chief Inspector in the Essex Police Force.

Chief Inspector Wrigley introduced himself to the Committee as being the District Commander of Police in the Uttlesford pilot area for the last two years. He was attending the Committee to give a police perspective. As District Commander, he had attended Community Forums and meetings and was familiar with the issues associated with the pilot project.

Chief Inspector Wrigley advised the Committee that there had been 2,800 reported crimes in Uttlesford in 2007/2008 and there had been 2,536 reported crimes during 2008/2009. There was a similar position in crime reduction in the other pilot project area in Maldon. He considered that there had been a reduction in crime for a number of different reasons. These included:

- The scene of every reported crime was visited by the police (this had helped to build public confidence).
- There was now better evidence gathering.
- Policing had improved and there were better relationships and good communications with the public and partners.
- There was better recording and bench marking.
- There was better intelligence.

Chief Inspector Wrigley did not consider lighting as a significant issue. The Committee was advised that most dwelling burglaries happened during daylight hours when the occupants were out and the premises are empty. Numbers of these had been falling, with only 51 incidents since April 2009. A good many

dwelling burglaries related to the theft of cars, with burglars gaining access to properties to find the car keys. Other possessions were often not touched.

Chelmsford and Braintree, where the lights are switched on, had more crime than Maldon and Uttlesford. The bulk of violent crime occurred in town centres, which tended to be lit and were committed by known persons. It was very rare for unprovoked attacks to occur. Most violent crime involved the young, as younger people tend to be attracted to and congregate in areas where the lights were on. Chief Inspector Wrigley advised the Committee that he considered the exceptions criteria between lit and unlit areas in the pilot area to be reasonable.

Chief Inspector Wrigley advised the Committee that he accepted the perception of the public was a big issue and it was important to reduce the fear of crime, but considered that no statistics would combat this. Chief Inspector Wrigley considered it was natural that communities would rather walk home along streets that were lit and natural for communities to feel safer with the lights on.

In answer to questions from Members, the following responses were made:

With regard to police detection within areas that had no lights, the police were not disadvantaged as police vehicles had their own floodlighting system.

With regard to replicating the pilot across Essex, each village/town would have different demography that would need to be taken into consideration.

With regard to vulnerable groups and older people, fear of crime may be misplaced, as violent crime in Uttlesford was carried out in places where the lights were switched on and impacted mostly upon young people.

With regard to road accidents, most accidents happened on country roads which had never been lit. After dark most main routes were lit. There had been no increase in road accident numbers recently.

With regard to anti social behaviour, these figures seemed to have risen in the pilot areas. A Member raised concerns that people were not reporting incidents for fear of reprisals.

With regard to Winstanley Road, statistics had shown no reported crimes between 2004 and 2007. There was a significantly higher crime rate during 2007 -2008 with four dwelling burglaries occurring within a six month period. This was a very localised crime which often was committed by one or two individuals in the area.

Councillor R Bass (speaking as individual but Cabinet Member at the time the pilot schemes were agreed).

Councillor Bass advised the Committee that, as Cabinet Member during 2006, he had been the instigator of the pilot schemes following extensive consultation. The decision to implement the pilot schemes was based upon the following reasons:

- County Council owned 120,000 lights in 2006 which cost £3.8 million annually in electricity costs.
- Prior to 1970 it had been commonplace to turn off lights during the night.

The Committee was advised that the existing pilot projects had proven to be successful and were seen as politically acceptable. Extending the pilots countywide would save £1 million per year.

Councillor Bass recognised that this was a sensitive area of the County Council's responsibility. However he asked that the Committee be radical in its advice, and to approve the implementation of part-night street lighting schemes across the county.

The Committee was advised that there appeared to be no common lighting standard in Essex. This had led to a lack of consistency. Most areas, particularly new areas such as Maltings Lane in Witham, were grossly over-lit. The Committee was asked to consider that some of these lamps, and some lamps in other areas, where it was clear that too many had been installed, should be permanently switched off.

Councillor Bass advised the Committee that it would not be cost effective to move the county to a new system; Officers would support schemes that provided uniformity of light and would support schemes that had a metered effect on major roads such as the A13. Also, the Committee was asked to consider that street lights be defaulted to off rather than defaulted to on.

In answer to questions from Members the following responses were made:

With regard to fear of crime especially in elderly females, Councillor Bass advised the Committee that there was clear evidence that crime did not rise with no street lights. It was generally accepted that the vast majority of elderly people were not usually out after midnight when the lights would be off. People could install low energy personal security lights should they wish to do so. The Councillor acknowledged this issue and questioned how the fear of crime could be overcome.

Members questioned whether a blanket scheme for the whole of the County should be introduced; or whether different schemes, consisting of different measures such as temporary switch off, partial switch off, and permanent switch off, be introduced according to the needs of different areas. The devices on each light which controlled the lighting between dusk and dawn used in the current pilot areas, and

the electronic timer devices used in the 1970s to switch off street lights, were mentioned by Members.

With regard to consulting with Parish, Town and Borough Councils in order that they be given an opportunity to choose what was best for their local demography and situation, Councillor Bass commented that views should be sought from other bodies and the onus (and any excess cost) could be put on District and Parish Councils to reach decisions based upon local needs. He reminded the Committee that the answer to the overall question of the reduction of street lighting was for Essex County Council to determine.

Councillor J Roberts reported upon discussions which had taken place at the West Essex Area Forum (which included the Uttlesford pilot area). The Forum had sought views from parish councils in its area and a major point which had arisen was the fear of crime and a general fear about areas being in the dark. It was acknowledged by the Forum that this may be irrational on occasions but it was a concern that was genuinely felt.

Should the Council feel that the proposals should proceed, clear exception criteria would be needed and there should be the opportunity for local district or parish councils to put forward areas which, in their view, should be excluded from any proposals to turn off lights.