

**STATEMENT TO THE OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL DECISIONS MEETING ON 14<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2024 ON THE PROPOSAL TO REDUCE STREET LIGHTING IN OXFORDSHIRE BY PATRICK COULTER CHAIR OF THE HEADINGTON NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM.**

I am Patrick Coulter Chair of Headington Neighbourhood Forum. The Forum aims to improve the quality of life for everyone who lives works or studies in Headington. All of these people will be affected by the proposal to substantially reduce our street lighting.

You are by now well aware of the concern about the impacts across Oxfordshire. My aim today is to ensure that there will be full and adequate consultation on the proposals **in accordance with your stated principles and policy for consultation.**

We have a legitimate expectation that you will adhere to these principles but so far that has not happened.

For a start **you state that “we consult widely to ensure that we understand the needs and views of local communities.**

Not just the major institutions and statutory consultees but local communities. You must talk to us in our local communities both young and old, men and women, workers and drivers and all those who move around in the hours of darkness.

**You state that consultation must be a time when proposals are still at a formative stage.**

I note the Chair has stated that people have misunderstood the current proposal to be an implementation plan - that's because it is an implementation plan! Please wind back and consult on an outline proposal.

**You state that there will be adequate time for people to consider a proposal, participate and respond. The length of time will be proportionate to the extent to the impact of the proposal.**

In this case as it will impact the whole population of Oxfordshire it will require a substantial length of time to complete.

**You state that full consideration will be give to responses before decisions are made and that there must be an audit trail to show this.**

We completely agree and look forward to seeing the audit trail in due course.

This is a very significant proposal which will affect us all. We urge the Council to meet our legitimate expectations and to carry out a comprehensive consultation on an outline proposal to include all members of our local communities **and fully in accordance with your stated policy and principles for consultation.**

Thank you.