Night Skies Consultation – Report for Full Council 9th June 2025

Purpose of this Document

The purpose of this document is to report on how the Night Skies community consultation is going at this stage, including both qualitative and quantitative data gathered from this, as well as suggestions and queries related to this proposal.

General Overview

This consultation was started on Monday 31st March 2025, and has so far received **86 responses** at the time of signing off this report.
The target audience of this consultation is anyone in Long Stratton who may be affected by the changes in streetlighting.
Methods available to the public for giving their thoughts include picking up a paper copy from the office, the digital form on the Night Skies page on our website, or having a digital copy of the form sent to them via email. So far we have only had people fill in the form from the page on our website.

This has so far been promoted on our website, Facebook (our page, both Mardles and the Long Stratton Community Noticeboard), the Sextons Wheel and posters on our noticeboards.
This will also be promoted in the next Long Stratton Town Council Newsletter.

Data Storing

All responses are recorded in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, saved in a Night Skies folder. This folder is accessible to most Council Officers.
Any responses collected from the digital form on the website are sent directly to the Office inbox, where they are then moved to a Night Skies folder. All responses are anonymous, and no personal details are collected.

Data Analysis

At the current stage of the consultation, we have received **86 responses**. We have a population of approximately 4000. I would recommend continuing this consultation until Tuesday 30th September 2025, to give a total of 6 months for residents to respond. Responses are becoming more frequent now that awareness of this proposed project is increasing, with a total of **25 responses within just 24 hours** recently. A period of 6 months allows all who would be affected to give their opinion on the project and any suggestions, as well as ask questions about it.

Quantitative Data:

So far, the majority of respondents are in favour of the Night Skies project, with **63% voting "Yes"** under "Do you think Night Skies is a Good Idea?", **28% voting "No"** and **9% voting "Unsure"**.

100% of the responses so far have been **digital**, no paper copies have been picked up as of signing off this report.

Respondents were asked how they found out about the Night Skies consultation. **"Facebook"** is the main way people have been finding out about the consultation, with **76%** of total responses coming from there, and **"Letter/Magazine"** was the second highest, with **16%** of responses. **"Word of Mouth"** was **6%** of responses and **"Website"** was **2%** of responses.

Qualitative Data:

Respondents were asked if there was anything they liked or disliked about the proposal for Night Skies. Likes or positives included reduced cost and light pollution, less energy consumption, better sleep quality, a visible night sky and better conditions for wildlife.

Dislikes or concerns included safety of those walking alone at night, initial cost of modifying the streetlights, changes to council tax, possibility of increased crime and safety of wildlife on the roads when drivers are around.

Respondents were also asked for any suggestions they had for the proposal, this included:

- Keeping some lights on in areas with a higher rate of crime, alleyways, near the library, crossings, etc;
- Turning the lights off earlier (and in contrast, turning them off later was also suggested);
- Add CCTV to deter possible crime;
- Replace current bulbs with dimmer ones;
- Turn off the lights in dense housing estates, keep them on elsewhere;
- Make a paper version of the consultation available (this has been done);
- Light up one side of the road instead of two;
- Ask people to also consider light pollution caused by an increase in garden lights;
- Keep the lights on during winter months;
- Move, remove or shield the streetlights at request from individuals;
- Use downlights instead;
- More promotions of Night Skies, discuss the value and benefits of the project;
- Turn off every other light and keep the rest on;
- Encourage those concerned about safety to use different alternatives;
- Use motion sensor lights that come on when needed;
- Get advice from emergency services and other towns that have carried out a similar project;
- Carry the project out slowly/in stages to get people used to the idea;
- Ensure new housing follows this system from the start.

There were also a few queries from respondents:

- Will this lead to a reduction in Council Tax?
- Will this include Hempnall Roundabout?
- Will this include the A140?
- Can we tackle the lighting on The Mill (formerly Leeders Mill)?
- Can we install shields on streetlights that may be kept on?
- Can we leave some lights on?

- Will the lights be turned off over the whole town?
- Will the streetlights on the A140 be reduced once the bypass is built?
- Are there any proposals generally for the A140?
- Do we currently use the most cost-saving, energy-efficient bulbs?
- Can we remove the lights on the A140?

Next Steps

Having read through all of the responses, it became clear that residents of Long Stratton are unaware of which streetlights are owned by us, and which aren't. To tackle this, our Direct Services Officer has plotted all of the LSTC-owned streetlights on a map of the town, which I will then plot onto a digital map to combine with the consultation form, both digital and paper. This will allow respondents to make a more informed decision when expressing their thoughts on this consultation as they will understand which lights will be affected.
This will also benefit the Council as residents will become more aware of what LSTC is actually responsible for, leading to reports being directed to the correct council and action being taken more quickly.

It also became clear that we need to do more to explain how Council Tax is spent so residents can better understand what public money is going towards.

Promotion of the Night Skies consultation will be more frequent and also more descriptive; I will put together a detailed list of the benefits (and potential drawbacks) of this project so that people can better understand what this will mean for the town. More posters will be dotted around the town, including around the park and in other public spaces.

This Night Skies community consultation will continue, and I will prepare a report for each Full Council meeting moving forward to keep track of the consultation's progress and monitor how well the information is getting out there, as well as suggestions and queries raised in responses.

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Date: 9th June 2025

Signature of Author: M Hallett