

To: Council
Date: 14 July 2025
Report of: Director of Law, Governance and Strategy
Title of Report: Motions and amendments received in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11.18

Councillors are asked to debate and reach conclusions on the motions and amendment listed below in accordance with the Council's rules for debate.

The Constitution permits an hour for debate of these motions.

Introduction

This document sets out motions received by the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11.18 by the deadline of 1.00pm on 2 July 2025, as amended by the proposers.

All substantive amendments sent by councillors to the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy by publication of the briefing note are also included below.

Unfamiliar terms are explained in the glossary or in footnotes.

Motions will be taken in turn from the Oxford Community Independents, Oxford Independent Group, Real Independent, Labour, Liberal Democrat, Green Independent Oxford Alliance groups in that order.

Introduction

- a) Oppose the County Council Congestion Charge Scheme (Proposed by Councillor James Taylor, Seconded by Councillor Asima Qayyum) [Amendment Proposed by Councillor David Henwood, Seconded by Councillor Saj Malik]
- b) Ban Smartphones in Oxford Schools (Proposed by Councillor Katherine Miles, Seconded by Councillor Andrew Gant)
- c) Protecting trans peoples' access to services (Proposed by Councillor Alex Powell, Seconded by Councillor Chris Jarvis) [Amendment Proposed by Councillor Simon Ottino, Seconded by Councillor Ed Turner]
- d) Keep Oxfordshire's street lights on (Proposed by Councillor Susan Brown, Seconded by Councillor Lubna Arshad) [Amendment Proposed by Councillor Chris Smowton, Seconded by Councillor Katherine Miles]
- e) Environmental Protections in the Planning and Infrastructure Bill (Proposed by Councillor Andrew Gant, Seconded by Councillor Chris Smowton)

a) Oppose the County Council Congestion Charge Scheme (Proposed by Councillor James Taylor, Seconded by Councillor Asima Qayyum) [Amendment Proposed by Councillor David Henwood, Seconded by Councillor Saj Malik]

Labour Group Motion

This council resolves to express its opposition to the congestion charge scheme proposed by the county council.

Independent Oxford Alliance Group Amendment

This council resolves to express its opposition to the congestion charge scheme proposed by the county council.

The council additionally expresses its concerns over modelling which suggests the congestion charge will:

- increase traffic on already-busy / congested outer Oxford roads during morning and evening rush hour, notably Woodstock Road, Garsington Road and the Eastern Bypass near Cowley¹ (where average daily traffic is predicted to rise by 1966 vehicles).²
- decrease traffic³ on already free-flowing roads, notably St Cross Road and Marston Ferry Road – while increasing traffic on residential Marsh Lane.⁴
- fail to reduce overall traffic on Hollow Way.⁵

If agreed, the motion would read:

This council resolves to express its opposition to the congestion charge scheme proposed by the county council.

The council additionally expresses its concerns over modelling which suggests the congestion charge will:

- increase traffic on already-busy / congested outer Oxford roads during morning and evening rush hour, notably Woodstock Road, Garsington Road and the Eastern Bypass near Cowley⁶ (where average daily traffic is predicted to rise by 1966 vehicles).⁷
- decrease traffic⁸ on already free-flowing roads, notably St Cross Road and Marston Ferry Road – while increasing traffic on residential Marsh Lane.⁹
- fail to reduce overall traffic on Hollow Way.¹⁰

¹ [OCC Cabinet. Traffic filter trial delay – mitigation proposals. 17 June 2025.](#)

² [Modelling and income forecasting report \(Steer Report\) figure 4.4, Figure 4.6.](#)

³ [Air Quality Technical Note - Issue \(Ricardo report\) Appendix 2.](#)

⁴ [Modelling and income forecasting report \(Steer Report\) figure 4.4, Figure 4.6.](#)

⁵ [Air Quality Technical Note - Issue \(Ricardo report\) Appendix 2.](#)

⁶ [OCC Cabinet. Traffic filter trial delay – mitigation proposals. 17 June 2025.](#)

⁷ [Modelling and income forecasting report \(Steer Report\) figure 4.4, Figure 4.6.](#)

⁸ [Air Quality Technical Note - Issue \(Ricardo report\) Appendix 2.](#)

⁹ [Modelling and income forecasting report \(Steer Report\) figure 4.4, Figure 4.6.](#)

¹⁰ [Air Quality Technical Note - Issue \(Ricardo report\) Appendix 2.](#)

b) Ban Smartphones in Oxford Schools (Proposed by Councillor Katherine Miles, Seconded by Councillor Andrew Gant)

Liberal Democrats Group Motion

This Council calls for restrictions on the use of smartphones in all primary and secondary schools for children up to the age of 16 years within Oxford

MP Josh MacAlister's Safer Phones Bill¹¹ has been watered down to exclude the ban on smartphones in schools. He reports, "It's time to address the negative effects of excessive screen time and social media use on children's health, sleep and learning. Parents are crying out for legislation to support them in keeping their children safe from online harm. Gen Z themselves regret how long they spend on social media".

Gillian McDermott Head of Cutteslowe Primary School points to Jonathan Haidt's *The Anxious Generation*,¹² showing overwhelmingly the harm done to children through excessive use of smartphones. The author examined what happened to young people in the early 2010s that triggered the surge of anxiety and depression, social isolation and cyber-bullying and academic disengagement from 2012 which in some cases have contributed to self harm and death since then.

The LibDem MP Max Wilkinson¹³ says regulations are far behind reality and technology. Barnardos¹⁴ say that the average teenager is spending up to five hours a day on social media. Ofcom research¹⁵ found that 71% of children aged between 5 and 15 used a smartphone to get online in 2023. 75% of parents had concerns related to content inappropriate for their children's age. 73% was adult or sexual content.

Eric Schmit¹⁶ the ex-boss of Google and Alphabet emphasised the use of smartphones can be safe but need to be moderated. "Why," he asks, "would we run such a large uncontrolled experiment on the most important people in the world, which is the next generation?"

The council recognises that digital devices (e.g. a tablet, camera or video recorder) may be permitted for certain academic activities or research but should be provided by the school if required for learning. Moreover, students with specific learning needs may be permitted to use a digital device without social media access as a support tool.

Finally, this Council recognises that many parents in our city have signed up to the parent pact for a Smart-Phone Free Childhood – a collective agreement to delay getting kids smartphones until at least 14, and social media 16.

This Council:

1. Supports the principles of a Smartphone Free Childhood
2. Regrets that Josh McAlister's Bill has been watered down.

¹¹ 7 March 2025 BBC News Safer Phones Bill October 2024

¹² Cutteslowe Community Partnership Full Meeting 6 Feb 2025 The Anxious Generation Jonathan Haidt, Penguin 2024

¹³ BBC R4 Any Questions 07.03.25

¹⁴ Westminster Hall Debate May 2024

¹⁵ Children and Parents: Media Use and Attitudes 29.03.2023

¹⁶ BBC 13 Feb 2025

3. Notes that Secretaries of State for Education have favoured mandatory limits on mobile phone use in schools over the last fifteen years.
4. Asks the Leader to write to the Secretary of State for Education urging support for the original intentions of the McAlister Bill.
5. Asks the Leader to write to all schools in the city to offer the council's support and encouragement to continue to develop policies addressing concerns related to smartphone and social media use in schools.
6. Ask the Leader of the Council to look into whether the City Council can do this and implement as possible

c) Protecting trans peoples' access to services (Proposed by Councillor Alex Powell, Seconded by Councillor Chris Jarvis) [Amendment Proposed by Councillor Simon Ottino, Seconded by Councillor Ed Turner]

Green Group Motion

Council notes:

1. Whilst the Council accepts the interpretation of the courts which are now law, the wider principles of the November 2021 motion still apply and still reflect this Council's beliefs.¹⁷
2. That motion stated: "Trans women are women. Trans men are men. Non-binary people are non-binary."
3. It continued by saying: "Our aspiration is for Oxford to be a safe, welcoming and inclusive city for everyone, no matter their gender identity."
4. Since the passing of the motion, the Supreme Court has issued a ruling on the definition of the protected characteristic of sex as set out in the Equality Act.¹⁸

Council believes:

1. The principles of the November 2021 motion still apply and still reflect this Council's beliefs.
2. Since the November 2021 motion was passed by this council, trans and non-binary people have been subjected to a manufactured moral panic which seeks to demonise their very existence and undermine their rights.
3. Overly simplistic approaches to understanding sex, gender and sexuality can undermine the rights not only of trans and non-binary people, but also those of gender non-conforming cisgender people.
4. Trans and non-binary residents of our city deserve reassurance that they will not be discriminated against in the provision of council services.

Council resolves:

¹⁷ <https://mycouncil.oxford.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=31680>

¹⁸ <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-10259/>

1. To request the leader of the council writes to the Minister for Women and Equalities calling for the government to introduce new legislation which protects trans rights and access to services.
2. To request the leader of the council writes to the Equality and Human Rights Commission calling for it to ensure that the Code of Practice it issues in relation to the Supreme Court ruling does not lead to trans and non-binary people facing discrimination or harassment in service provision.
3. To request that the leader of the council publicly sets out how the city council intends to ensure that its provision - including public toilets, community centres, housing and homelessness services and leisure provision remain trans inclusive.
4. To request that the leader of the Council and the Cabinet Members for Healthy Fairer Oxford, for Planning and Culture and for Citizen Focused Services undertake to work with both council bodies and local businesses to ensure that the rights and dignity of trans and non-binary residents of Oxford are supported to the maximum extent permitted by law in the delivery of services.
5. To request that the Cabinet member for Healthy Fairer Oxford write to the director of More Leisure publicly stating the councils support for an inclusive approach to accessing facilities and encourage More Leisure to ensure that they continue to provide services which are, to the maximum extent permissible by law, appropriate to the self-identification of Oxford residents.

Labour Group Amendment

Council notes:

1. Whilst the Council accepts the interpretation of the courts which are now law, the wider principles of the November 2021 motion still apply and still reflect this Council's beliefs.¹⁹
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4. Since the passing of the motion, the Supreme Court has issued a ruling on the definition of the protected characteristic of sex as set out in the Equality Act.²⁰

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4. Trans and non-binary residents of our city deserve reassurance that they will not be discriminated against in the provision of council services **or as employees of the Council**.

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3. To request that the leader of the council publicly sets out how the city council intends to **follow the Code of Practice and** ensure that its provision - including public **and workplace** toilets, community centres, housing and homelessness services and leisure provision remain trans inclusive **to the maximum permissible by law**.
4. To request that the leader of the Council and the Cabinet Members for Healthy Fairer Oxford, for Planning and Culture and for Citizen Focused Services undertake to work with both council bodies and local businesses to **understand and interpret the Code of Practice** ensure that the rights and dignity of trans and non-binary residents of Oxford are supported to the maximum extent permitted by law in the delivery of services.
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If agreed, the Motion would read:

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²¹ <https://mycouncil.oxford.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=31680>

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services and leisure provision remain trans inclusive to the maximum permissible by law.

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d) Keep Oxfordshire's street lights on (Proposed by Councillor Susan Brown, Seconded by Councillor Lubna Arshad) [Amendment Proposed by Councillor Chris Smowton, Seconded by Councillor Katherine Miles]

Labour Group Motion

Council notes:

- Well-lit streets are a key component to our community's safety, security, and well-being.
- According to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, an approximate [40% of all vehicle collisions occur at night time](#). Residents in nearby [Warwickshire](#) and [Northamptonshire](#), where street lights have been off for some years in the early hours, have reported feeling less safe at night due to the change.
- Proposals to switch off Oxfordshire's street lights at 11pm were originally proposed by the then Liberal Democrat and Green Party-led Oxfordshire County Council with some exceptions as detailed [here](#). If this had been implemented, the decision would have been carried out with just a week's notice being given to the general public, and with no opportunity for them to make their views heard.
- Fortunately public outrage from this council and others stopped that from happening
- The county council now talks about communities having the option to request 'part-night lighting' which it defines as switching them off between 12 midnight and 5.30am in urban areas.

Council believes:

- Every resident in Oxford has the right to feel safe in their community.
- Darkened streets create an environment that fosters antisocial behaviour and crime, putting our most vulnerable residents at increased risk.
- The County Council's proposals would have a detrimental and disproportionate impact on women and girls, as well as all those who work unsocial hours including those in the NHS, hospitality, and retail, carers, cyclists, and pedestrians.

- These proposals also disregard public safety concerns raised in tackling Violence Against Women and Girls, ignoring both actual and perceived risks.
- Particularly in urban areas, people will be heading home from a night out or to and from work during this period.
- During these hours there are fewer people around and many will already feel more vulnerable.

Council resolves:

- To ask the City Council cabinet to adopt a position to oppose any proposal by the County Council to turn street lights off at 12midnight in Oxford
- To call on the Leader of the City Council to write to the Leader of the County Council requesting them not to rush through this half-baked, dangerous, and divisive proposal for the sake of financial expediency.
- To share the concerns raised by local communities, Thames Valley Police, Anneliese Dodds MP, and Sean Woodcock MP, who have spoken out against these proposals.

Liberal Democrat Group Amendment

Council notes:

- Well-lit streets are a key component to our community's safety, security, and well-being.
- According to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, an approximate [40% of all vehicle collisions occur at night time](#). Residents in nearby [Warwickshire](#) and [Northamptonshire](#), where street lights have been off for some years in the early hours, have reported feeling less safe at night due to the change.
- **There is no evidence that Part-Night Lighting increases crime: some reports conclude it can reduce crime^{23 24 25 26}**
- Proposals to switch off **some of** Oxfordshire's street lights at 11pm were originally proposed by the then Liberal Democrat and Green Party-led Oxfordshire County Council with some exceptions as detailed here. ~~If this had been implemented, the decision would have been carried out with just a week's notice being given to the general public, and with no opportunity for them to make their views heard.~~
- ~~Fortunately public outrage from this council and others stopped that from happening.~~
- **Due to feedback from City and County councillors as well as campaigners and members of the public, these plans were withdrawn for further revision.**
- The County Council now talks about communities having the option to request 'part-night lighting' which it defines as switching them off between 12 midnight and 5.30am in urban areas.

²³ <https://www.essex.pfcc.police.uk/news/report-finds-no-evidence-part-night-lighting-impact-crime-levels>

²⁴ <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/news/2022/mar/street-lighting-may-enable-rather-hinder-street-crime>

²⁵ <https://www.wendover-pc.gov.uk/post/less-lighting-has-no-impact-on-crime-or-collisions-says-report>

²⁶ <https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/documents/s120181/9%20App%20A%20-%20Streetlighting%20and%20Crime%20Report.pdf>

- There are clear guidelines in the county's proposal which indicate that areas in Oxford are unlikely to meet the criteria for implementation
- The county council's proposal includes processes which ensure that any scheme will only go forward at the active request of local elected members, and that in Oxford this responsibility sits with ward councillors rather than this council as a whole

Council believes:

- The suitability of Part-Night Lighting varies significantly from place to place: what is appropriate for Oxford naturally varies significantly from what is suitable for more rural locations.
- Whether individual towns and parishes outside Oxford feel PNL is suitable for their circumstances is a matter for them; this Council therefore restricts this motion to Oxford only.
- Every resident in Oxford has the right to feel safe in their community.
- Darkened streets **in the wrong context** may create an environment that fosters antisocial behaviour and crime, putting our most vulnerable residents at increased risk.
- ~~The County Council's proposals~~ **Part-night lighting, if requested in an inappropriate context**, would have a detrimental and disproportionate impact on women and girls, as well as all those who work unsocial hours including those in the NHS, hospitality, and retail, carers, cyclists, and pedestrians.
- ~~These proposals also disregard~~ **Similarly, deploying PNL in an inappropriate location may aggravate** public safety concerns raised in tackling Violence Against Women and Girls, ~~ignoring~~ **relating to** both actual and perceived risks.
- Particularly in urban areas, people will be heading home from a night out or to and from work during this period.
- During these hours there are fewer people around and many will already feel more vulnerable.

Council resolves:

- To ask the City Council cabinet to adopt a position **to decline to apply in its capacity as Local Authority** ~~to oppose any proposal by the County Council to turn street lights off at 12 midnight in Oxford.~~
- To call on the Leader of the City Council to write to the Leader of the County Council requesting them not to ~~rush through this half-baked, dangerous, and divisive proposal for the sake of financial expediency~~ **apply part-night lighting in Oxford, and to maintain its present intent only to proceed with PNL where the local town or parish council or local authority, as well as the local County Councillor, give their support.**
- To share the concerns raised by local communities, Thames Valley Police, ~~Anneliese Dodds MP and Sean Woodcock MP~~ **and MPs and Councillors across Oxford**, who have ~~spoken out against~~ **expressed views** regarding these proposals.

If agreed, the motion would read:

Council notes:

- Well-lit streets are a key component to our community's safety, security, and well-being.
- According to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, an approximate [40% of all vehicle collisions occur at night time](#). Residents in nearby [Warwickshire](#) and [Northamptonshire](#), where street lights have been off for some years in the early hours, have reported feeling less safe at night due to the change.
- There is no evidence that Part-Night Lighting increases crime: some reports conclude it can reduce crime^{27 28 29 30}
- Proposals to switch off some of Oxfordshire's street lights at 11pm were originally proposed by the then Liberal Democrat and Green Party-led Oxfordshire County Council with some exceptions as detailed here.
- Due to feedback from City and County councillors as well as campaigners and members of the public, these plans were withdrawn for further revision.
- The County Council now talks about communities having the option to request 'part-night lighting' which it defines as switching them off between 12 midnight and 5.30am in urban areas.
- There are clear guidelines in the county's proposal which indicate that areas in Oxford are unlikely to meet the criteria for implementation
- The county council's proposal includes processes which ensure that any scheme will only go forward at the active request of local elected members, and that in Oxford this responsibility sits with ward councillors rather than this council as a whole

Council believes:

- The suitability of Part-Night Lighting varies significantly from place to place: what is appropriate for Oxford naturally varies significantly from what is suitable for more rural locations.
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- Similarly, deploying PNL in an inappropriate location may aggravate public safety concerns raised in tackling Violence Against Women and Girls, ignoring relating to both actual and perceived risks.
- Particularly in urban areas, people will be heading home from a night out or to and from work during this period.
- During these hours there are fewer people around and many will already feel more vulnerable.

Council resolves:

- To ask the City Council cabinet to adopt a position to decline to apply in its capacity as Local Authority to turn street lights off at 12 midnight in Oxford.
- To call on the Leader of the City Council to write to the Leader of the County Council requesting them not to apply part-night lighting in Oxford, and to maintain its present intent only to proceed with PNL where the local town or parish council or local authority, as well as the local County Councillor, give their support.
- To share the concerns raised by local communities, Thames Valley Police, and MPs and Councillors across Oxford, who have expressed views regarding these proposals.

e) Environmental Protections in the Planning and Infrastructure Bill (Proposed by Councillor Andrew Gant, Seconded by Councillor Chris Smowton)

Liberal Democrats Group Motion

Council notes that the Planning and Infrastructure Bill³¹ will, if passed, significantly change the way this council makes planning decisions. Council believes these changes will curtail local democratic oversight and reduce environmental protections.

Clause 51 gives the Secretary of State powers to decide which applications are heard at committee, and to dictate the size and composition of planning committees.

Part 3 removes the requirement for developers to undertake an environmental impact assessment and deliver mitigation on a site-specific basis. Instead, clauses 66 to 75 provide for a “nature restoration levy”, allocated at national level by Natural England (called “cash to trash”³² by the RSPB).

This council believes these measures go entirely against the spirit of effective local decision-making and evidence-based environmental protection.

Council agrees with the Office for Environmental Protection:

In our considered view, the bill would have the effect of reducing the level of environmental protection provided for by existing environmental law. As drafted, the provisions are a regression.³³

³¹ <https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/61396/documents/6667>

³² As quoted by Carla Denyer MP, HoC, 9 June 2025, see HC Hansard, col 689: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2025-06-09/debates/3B8E0A89-3756-49FB-8C07-CECF3B58A26A/PlanningandInfrastructureBill>

³³ 1 May 2025: <https://www.theoep.org.uk/report/oep-gives-advice-government-planning-and-infrastructure-bill>

Council also agrees with the 32 environmental organisations³⁴ and 81 environmentalists and academics who publicly criticised the bill, calling for a “Pause to bad law”.³⁵

Council also agrees with Labour MP Chris Hinchcliff, who pointed out that “profit maximisation” is the biggest barrier to development, not “clear processes that uphold democracy and nature”.³⁶

This Bill will damage Oxford and Oxfordshire permanently, and will not build a single extra house.

Council asks the Leader to write to Oxford’s MPs communicating these concerns, and asking them to oppose these elements in the bill.

³⁴ Wildlife and Countryside Link, ‘Letter to Steve Reed MP, secretary of state for environment, food and rural affairs, ref Planning and Infrastructure Bill’, 8 April 2025:
<https://www.wcl.org.uk/docs/2025/20250408WCLJointPlanningLetter.pdf>

³⁵ Justin Adams et al, ‘Joint statement: Pause to bad law- a call for meaningful consultation on the Planning and Infrastructure Bill’, 22 May 2025: see House of Lords briefing, 19 June 2025, page 53: <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/LLN-2025-0025/LLN-2025-0025.pdf>

³⁶ Report stage, 10-11 June 2025, backbench amendment no. 69, see HC Hansard, 9 June 2025, col 678 and 729: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2025-06-09/debates/3B8E0A89-3756-49FB-8C07-CECF3B58A26A/PlanningandInfrastructureBill>

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