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House of Commons
London
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**Councillor Sue Cooper
Leader of the Council**

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Dear David,

I am writing on behalf of South Oxfordshire District Council regarding light pollution and the importance of preserving dark skies.

There is a growing body of evidence that demonstrates the harmful impacts of light pollution on the health and wellbeing of humans, plants, insects and nocturnal animals – much of which could be preventable. Moreover, the increasing prevalence of excessive and unnecessary lighting is also destroying the ability of people to enjoy the majesty of a truly, dark and starry night.

As a council, South Oxfordshire recognises the importance of addressing the issue of light pollution and, therefore, welcomes the work being undertaken by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Dark Skies – including its ten policy recommendations for HM Government:

1. Strengthen the National Planning Policy Framework: for the first time ever, make extensive specific reference to the control of obtrusive light in the National Planning Policy Framework.
2. Expand the scope of the planning permission process: introduce regulations for exterior lighting that are similar to those which currently cover advertisements.
3. Strengthen Statutory Nuisance Provisions: remove exemptions to give local authorities a more effective method of preventing nuisance lighting.
4. Create a statutory Commission for Dark Skies: set up a statutory body to punish non-compliance and empowering local authorities and councils to enforce regulations.
5. Set standards for the brightness and colour temperature of lighting: establish legal limits to the amount of blue light that luminaires can have in their spectrum and encourage manufacturers, distributors and installers of lighting to adopt best practice in this area.
6. Set standards for the direction and density of lighting: introduce a legal requirement that all lighting units are sold and distributed with instructions for

the control of obtrusive light and dark skies-friendly mounting instructions and issue penalties for non-compliance.

7. Create 'best practice' use for lighting: design a national program of best practice 'Dark Sky Hours' in which categories of lighting can be either dimmed or turned off completely in consultation with the community, lighting professionals and local police.
8. Appoint a designated 'Minister for Dark Skies': give a new cross-departmental Minister a clear remit for the control and prevention of light pollution, as well as oversight of planning and environmental policies that concern dark skies.
9. Create a 'Dark Sky Towns & Cities' initiative: give local government the power to go further to reduce light pollution by creating a voluntary 'Dark Sky Town/City' classification.
10. Emphasise the role of education: work with educational and cultural institutions and NGOs to achieve widespread public awareness of the issue of light pollution.

We, therefore, call upon you to support efforts to implement these changes through new legislation and reform of the planning system. It is only by making these necessary modifications that we can truly tackle the scourge of light pollution.

I look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely



Councillor Sue Cooper
Leader of the Council