

Oxford SU Motion: Dark Skies (Mandate)

Mandate for Oxford SU to Oppose Street Lighting Reductions and Campaign for Safer Night-Time Conditions

Policy Statement

Oxford SU strongly opposes Oxfordshire County Council's proposed reductions to street lighting between 11:30pm–5:30am in rural areas and midnight–5:30am in urban areas. These reductions pose serious safety, accessibility, and wellbeing risks to students living, studying, and working across Oxford and surrounding areas.

Oxford SU and Oxford Brookes Union have raised concerns about the lack of meaningful student consultation and reject the Equality Impact Assessment's claim that such changes would have "no impact" on protected groups — a conclusion that is unsubstantiated and deeply concerning. While we welcome the deferral of this decision and the commitment to further review, Oxford SU maintains that no change should be made without full student engagement and safeguarding of night-time safety.

Policy Beliefs

- Street lighting is essential for student safety, particularly in residential areas and routes to hospitals, schools, and workplaces.
- Reductions in lighting will negatively impact Oxford's night-time economy and students' access to it.
- Students commuting late at night or early in the morning — including those on placements — are at increased risk in poorly lit environments.
- The Council failed to adequately consult student communities, who are particularly vulnerable to such changes.
- The Equality Impact Assessment does not sufficiently recognise the disproportionate effects on women, disabled students, and trans students.
- Given that changes will be implemented upon community request, students must be equipped and empowered to prevent lighting reductions locally.

Policy Mandates

Oxford SU and its Sabbatical Officers are mandated to:

- Campaign against all proposed reductions to street lighting in areas affecting students and advocate for maintaining current provision.

- Issue a public joint statement with Oxford Brookes Union restating student concerns and demanding prioritisation of safety.
- Attend all relevant Oxfordshire County Council meetings and consultations to represent student interests.
- Collaborate with Common Rooms and campaigns to identify at-risk areas (e.g. Cowley, South Park, hospital routes) and secure exemptions from any Part Night Lighting (PNL) schemes.
- Launch a student-facing campaign ahead of the May 2025 consultation, including:
 - Guidance on consultation participation
 - Information on writing to local councillors
 - Engagement events and awareness materials
- Lobby for a revised Equality Impact Assessment that fully reflects student safety needs, including those of women, disabled, and trans students.
- Monitor and report on local-level lighting proposals and support student efforts to oppose reductions through campaigning and training.