

# Evidence, Engagement and Consultation Summary

Ref no. P5 Cease provision of Christmas lights

## Description of proposal

The council currently provide illuminated Christmas decorations in the town and district centres. This proposal would reduce provision down to festooned Christmas trees only unless community or business sponsorship could be secured.

Total saving: £40,000

## Estimated Net Saving / new income

£40,000

## Summary of evidence, engagement, and consultation

11 responses on this proposal were made via the online survey, 38% of all responses received.

Overall, 55% (6 people) did not support this proposal, 3 people (27%) supported it but with concerns / amendments. 2 people fully supported the proposal.

Comments against this proposal refer to the lights bringing much needed seasonal cheer and enjoyment to visitors;

*“Walsall is not a nice place to walk through only exception is the Arboretum, not having the lights up only makes it more miserable during the festive season and can affect mental health.”*

*“It makes the town look cheery and happy with the lights, no Christmas lights at a darker time of year is depressing for residents and visitors alike.”*

*“Depressing and general spoil sport of all councils.”*

*“Everything in society is downbeat at the moment so I think this is a pretty miserable thing to do.”*

One referred to the importance of recognising faith;

*“The spirit of Christmas is important; residents of faith should expect this.”*

Those who supported the proposal but with concerns or amendments referred to planned town and district centre improvements and whether businesses have been approached to help fund it.

*“This is real shame and would be difficult to bring back once it is stopped. How does this fit with the future plans for district and town centres and the Town Centre Masterplan. Have businesses been approached to share the cost.”*

Another respondent felt it could work, querying plans for Short Heath lights, while another stated that if Christmas lights are stopped all other festival lights should also be reduced / stopped.

*“In theory this could work, but aren't you trying to stop the lights in Short Heath?”*

*“I don't care if you reduce Christmas lights to save money but only if all other lights and festivals are also reduced.”*

Those in support of the proposal did not comment.

Alternatives suggestions included;

*“Use additional lamp posts to advertise, then allow community groups to install decorative lights to shine on them.”*

*“Get businesses to pay a small amount each year. Crowdfund the xmas lights.”*

*“Stop wasting money on things like giant plant pots.”*

*“Reduce cutting the grass parks further which will increase bee and bugs population stop cutting down trees that don't need cutting down.”*

*“Don't have a mayor that is just a superficial head.”*

### **Overall opinion from engagement and consultation**

Overall opinion on this proposal is against.

### **Justifiable action from the evidence, engagement and consultation suggested in the Equality Impact Assessment**

A - No major change required.

### **Mitigating actions required, if proposal approved**

NA

### **People potentially negatively affected if proposal approved**

Potential negative perception of this proposal from those who follow a Christian, Hindu, Sikh, or Muslim faith.

### **Response from Walsall Council on Proposal Ref P5**

Following consideration of consultation feedback and equality impact assessment, Cabinet intend to seek sponsorship for all festive lights.