

Cllr Bethia Thomas  
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By email

Councillor Liz Leffman  
Leader of the Council

19 January 2026

Dear Bethia,

Thank you for your letter dated 22 December 2025 regarding the unauthorised attachment of flags to street lighting in Oxfordshire. I apologise for the delay in sending you this formal response.

As you will be aware, we updated our [public statement](#) on 22 December regarding our approach to the removal of flags and other unauthorised items from streetlights and other street furniture maintained by the county council. Further information about the council's approach was provided at the all-member briefing on 6 January.

### **Reporting and removal**

To report flags or other potential unauthorised items, please use our online reporting tool [Fix My Street](#).

The removal of unauthorised items will be prioritised based on the level of risk. Items that present an immediate danger will be removed as quickly as possible, while other items will be removed as soon as practically possible, but within 28 days of us being informed.

If we have locations where flags are repeatedly re-installed, we will consider the best approach to take, both to support community concerns and to ensure appropriate use of council resources.

### **Other action**

We are working closely with our partners at Thames Valley Police on this issue. They are looking at increased visibility on the ground through additional neighbourhood policing teams where required. They will also investigate any incitement to hatred incidents - whether threatening words, behaviour or material. Please report any such incidents directly to the police.

The Cabinet and I remain absolutely committed to ensuring Oxfordshire remains a place of welcome and inclusion for people seeking sanctuary. We are proud to be recognised as the first county council to be awarded Local Authority of Sanctuary status and the first county area to become a Marmot Place. These efforts reflect the values of our county and the resilience of our communities.

As you will know, Council approved a motion on community cohesion at its meeting on 9 December 2025 and officers will be updating Cabinet shortly on the proposed action plan. Officers are also currently looking into the possibility of holding a series of deliberative democracy events, using the listening exchanges model recently trialled by the University of Oxford on low traffic neighbourhoods, to bring together people with different views through facilitated conversations as a way to build understanding and common ground.

We are aware of the range of strong views that are held across the county about flags and the tension this can cause within communities. Our overarching priority is to keep our public spaces and roads for everyone, and to foster respectful and positive discussion.

Thank you again for your letter and please do not hesitate to contact me with any further questions on this matter.

Yours sincerely

Liz

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Liz Leffman', with a stylized, cursive script.

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