
Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Position Statement (June 2016)

Obtrusive Lighting in the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Stour Valley Project area

Introduction

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) are designated by the Government for the purpose of ensuring that the natural beauty of the finest landscapes in England and Wales is conserved and enhanced. The Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Partnership¹ produce occasional position statements outlining its position on specific issues. The Partnership seeks to extend the AONB service to the wider Stour Valley and hence consider this statement covering the whole of the AONB and Stour Valley Project area.

The Partnership recognises that lighting can be beneficial to society in terms of guiding and providing a sense of security, however lighting in the *wrong place* is a form of pollution and as such it can have an adverse impact upon natural beauty and special qualities of an area.

Purpose

This position statement, endorsed by the Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Partnership, provides guidance to local planning authorities, landowners and other interested parties regarding lighting in the Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley.

Background

The Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution published a report on artificial light in the environment² and recommended that:

Those responsible for the management of existing National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty should seek to eliminate unnecessary outdoor light and to better design and manage that which cannot be eliminated

The Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Management Plan, 2016-2021, endorsed by the 15 members of the Partnership, includes the following Management Plan Objective in section 3.1.5

Protect the area, including its setting, from developments that detract from its natural beauty and special qualities, including its relative tranquillity.

Position

¹ ¹ Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Partnership at <http://www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org/about-us/jac-and-partnership/>

² Artificial Light in the Environment, see report at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/228832/9780108508547.pdf.pdf

It is considered by the Partnership new exterior lighting proposed as part of a planning application or otherwise, within the Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley or where it may impact upon it, should be kept to the minimum required and only appropriate to its purpose, so as to protect the area's natural beauty and special qualities.

Proposals for lighting should follow good practice as set out in: *Guidance notes for the reduction of light pollution*³ produced by the Institute of Lighting Engineers. Development proposals should demonstrate that there is not a significant adverse impact, individually or cumulatively, on the character of the area (including its natural beauty and special qualities), the visibility of the night sky, wildlife, residents or those enjoying the area.

National Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework notes in paragraph 125⁴:

By encouraging good design, planning policies and decisions should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation

For further information

Contact the Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley on 01394 445225 or dedhamVale.Project@suffolk.gov.uk

³ *Guidance notes for the reduction of light pollution*³ produced by the Institute of Lighting Engineers at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf

⁴ National Planning Policy Framework at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf