
REPORT TO:	Cabinet Member (Planning)
DATE:	23 rd January 2023
SERVICE AREA:	Place-Shaping and Economic Growth
REPORTING OFFICER:	Tracey Rathmell, Executive Officer Policy and Place <i>(Iain Mann, Nidderdale AONB Manager)</i>
SUBJECT:	PROTECTING DARK NIGHT SKIES IN NIDDERDALE AONB SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT
WARD/S AFFECTED:	All wards in the Nidderdale AONB
FORWARD PLAN REF:	N/A

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consider work on the Protecting Dark Night Skies in Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which supports the implementation of the Local Plan 2014-2035 and agree its content for consultation in February 2023.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

- 2.1 That the Cabinet Member approves the Draft Protecting Dark Night Skies in Nidderdale AONB SPD for consultation commencing in February 2023.
- 2.2 That the Executive Officer Policy and Place be authorised to make minor amendments and graphical improvements ahead of publication.

3.0 RECOMMENDED REASON/S FOR DECISION/S

- 3.1 As outlined in the Corporate Plan, the Local Plan is a key mechanism for delivering the Council's corporate priorities. This SPD supports a key policy in that Plan (GS6: Nidderdale AONB) by providing additional guidance to assist in its implementation.

4.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTION/S CONSIDERED AND RECOMMENDED FOR REJECTION

- 4.1 Not to produce the Protecting Dark Skies SPD. This option is rejected as the additional guidance provides clarity to our customers and will assist the

Council in seeking to achieve the highest quality development in the district and protecting its natural environment.

5.0 THE REPORT

Supplementary Planning Documents

- 5.1 SPDs provide additional information about how policies contained within Development Plan documents (such as the Local Plan 2014-35), can be taken forward. They do not contain new policies, but rather provide more information and clarity to how existing policies should be applied. Once adopted, they are used as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications in the district.
- 5.2 SPDs do not have to undergo independent examination, but the Council must consult on the content of any SPD before it can be adopted.
- 5.3 The Draft Protecting Dark Night Skies in Nidderdale AONB SPD has been prepared with input and support from colleagues across the Council, including the Council's Ecologist and Conservation Officers.
- 5.4 The SPD provides help and guidance for projects involving external lighting in the AONB. It contains information on dark skies and light pollution and provides practical advice about the design of lighting schemes and the choice of appropriate lighting technology so that everyone can play a part in reducing light pollution and protecting the AONB's dark skies.

The Importance of Protecting Dark Skies

- 5.5 Protecting dark skies is important as light pollution has potential to disrupt wildlife, adversely affect human health and erode tranquillity. Poor lighting choices can also waste energy and contribute to climate change.
- 5.6 The Nidderdale AONB contains some of the darkest skies in England as well as a diverse range of wildlife and habitats, making it particularly important to ensure that light pollution is reduced in this area.

Next Steps

- 5.6 If approved, the SPD will be published for consultation in line with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).
- 5.7 Responses to the consultation, alongside further technical work if required, will assist officers from the Policy and Place Team in finalising the SPD. It is anticipated that adoption of the final SPD will take place in Spring/Summer 2023 by the new North Yorkshire Council.
- 5.8 A Strategic Environmental Appraisal Screening has been undertaken for the Draft SPD which concludes that the SPD is unlikely to have significant environmental effects. The Screening Statement will be published for consultation alongside the SPD.

6.0 REQUIRED ASSESSMENTS AND IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The following were considered: Financial Implications; Human Resources Implications; Legal Implications; ICT Implications; Strategic Property/Asset Management Considerations; Risk Assessment; Equality and Diversity (the Public Sector Equality Duty and impact upon people with protected characteristics). If applicable, the outcomes of any consultations, assessments, considerations and implications considered necessary during preparation of this report are detailed below:

- This SPD has been drafted with input from relevant services across the Council.
- The Council's Principal Planning Lawyer has been consulted on the draft SPD.
- SPDs cannot introduce new planning or add unnecessarily to the financial burdens on development. Therefore there should be no new financial implications beyond those already considered in the Local Plan (adopted March 2020).

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

7.1 The Draft Protecting Dark Night Skies in Nidderdale AONB SPD has been prepared to support the implementation of Local Plan Policy GS6 (Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty). It contains information and guidance to help reduce light pollution in the AONB.

7.2 It is now recommended that the Draft SPD is published for consultation in order to gain a wide range of community and stakeholder views.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Draft Protecting Dark Night Skies in Nidderdale AONB SPD (Guidance for Local Plan Policy GS6: Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty).

Appendix 2 – Strategic Environmental Appraisal Screening Statement: Draft Protecting Dark Night Skies in Nidderdale AONB SPD.

Background Papers - None

OFFICER CONTACT: Please contact Iain Mann (Nidderdale AONB Manager) if you require any further information on the contents of this report. Officers can be contacted at: *Policy and Place, Place-shaping and Economic Growth, PO Box 787, Harrogate, HG1 9RW* or 01423 500600 or by e-mail Iain.Mann@harrogate.gov.uk