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Tuesday 27th February 2024

Notice of meeting:

Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee

Monday, 4th March, 2024 at 2.00 pm
The Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council Offices, High
Street, Coleford, GL16 8HG

AGENDA

Item No	Item	Pages
1.	Apologies for Absence, Introductions & New Members.	
2.	Declarations of Interest.	
3.	Public Questions - Bigsweir Bridge Restrictions & Monmouth Bridge Closure.	
4.	To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting dated 6th November 2023.	1 - 10
5.	Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) Review.	11 - 12
6.	National Landscape Team 2024/25 Work Programme:	
6.1.	Annual Report.	13 - 14
6.2.	AONB Annual Report Table.	15 - 24
7.	Position Statements:	
7.1.	Planning Guidance and Position Statements Report.	25 - 28
7.2.	Renewables.	29 - 72
7.3.	Dark Skies.	73 - 128

8.	Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL), Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) & HCF Wye Valley National Landscape Fund Update.	129 - 132
9.	National Updates - England and Wales.	133 - 136
10.	Partner and National Landscape Team Progress Reports and Updates.	137 - 140
11.	Dates of next meetings: Monday 1st July 2024 at 2.00pm. Monday 4th November 2024 at 2.00pm. The meetings will be held in the Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford.	

Paul Matthews

Chief Executive

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
CYNGOR SIR FYNWY

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMITTEE IS AS FOLLOWS:

Local Authority Members with Voting Powers

Gloucestershire:

T. Hale
G. Morgan

Herefordshire:

B. Durkin
G. Biggs
E. O'Driscoll
S. Cole

Monmouthshire:

E. Bryn
S. Garratt
D. Rooke
A.E. Webb

Forest of Dean:

D. Wheeler
C. McFarling

Town / Parish Community Councils with Voting Powers

C. Evers – Gloucestershire Association of Parish / Town Councils
B. Vine – Herefordshire Association Local Councils
Councillor R. Edwards – One Voice Wales

Co-opted Members with Voting Powers

Vacancy – Voluntary Conservation Sector in Gloucestershire
B. Nash - Voluntary Conservation Sector in Herefordshire
A. Thomas - Voluntary Conservation Sector in Monmouthshire
H. Dale – Country Land and Business Association
M. Price – National Farmers Union

Co-opted Members without Voting Powers

C. Barron – Wye Valley Society
R. Hesketh – River Wye Preservation Trust
A. Lee – Recreation Sector
R. Clay – Local Tourism Sector
C. Spicer – Local Wildlife Trusts
D. Price – National Farmers Union Wales

Public Information

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Welsh Language

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Aims and Values of Monmouthshire County Council

Our purpose

To become a zero-carbon county, supporting well-being, health and dignity for everyone at every stage of life.

Objectives we are working towards

- Fair place to live where the effects of inequality and poverty have been reduced.
- Green place to live and work with reduced carbon emissions and making a positive contribution to addressing the climate and nature emergency.
- Thriving and ambitious place, where there are vibrant town centres and where businesses can grow and develop.
- Safe place to live where people have a home where they feel secure in.
- Connected place where people feel part of a community and are valued.

Our Values

- **Openness:** we aspire to be open and honest to develop trusting relationships.
- **Fairness:** we aspire to provide fair choice, opportunities and experiences and become an organisation built on mutual respect.
- **Flexibility:** we aspire to be flexible in our thinking and action to become an effective and efficient organisation.
- **Teamwork:** we aspire to work together to share our successes and failures by building on our strengths and supporting one another to achieve our goals.
- **Kindness:** We will show kindness to all those we work with putting the importance of relationships and the connections we have with one another at the heart of all interactions.

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MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee held at The Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council Offices, High Street, Coleford, GL16 8HG on Monday, 6th November, 2023 at 2.00 pm

PRESENT: County Councillor A. Webb (Chair)

Elected Members (with voting powers)

Monmouthshire County Council

County Councillors: E. Bryn and S. Garratt

Gloucestershire County Council

County Councillor T. Hale and G. Morgan

Herefordshire Council

Councillor: E. O'Driscoll

Forest of Dean District Council

Councillor: C. McFarling

Town / Parish Community Councils with voting powers

GAPTC – Mr. C. Evers

Co-opted Members (with voting powers)

Voluntary Conservation Sector in Monmouthshire – Mr. A. Thomas

Voluntary Conservation Sector in Herefordshire – Mr. B. Nash

Co-opted Members (without voting powers)

Wye Valley Society – Mr. C. Barron

Local Tourism Sector – Ms. R. Clay

Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust - Dr. J. Hynes

Technical Advice Officers

Wye Valley AONB Manager – Mr. A. Blake

Monmouthshire County Council – Mr. R. Williams

AONB Planning Officer – Mr. J. Bailey

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APOLOGIES:

Councillors B. Durkin and D. Wheeler

Ms. B. Vine, Mr. D. Price, Mr. M. Price, Ms. C. Spicer, Mr. M. Lewis and Ms. E. Whitehouse

1. Declarations of Interest

None received.

2. Public Question Time

The Wye Valley AONB Manager will liaise with Monmouthshire County Council Highways Engineers for an update on the planned resurfacing works on the Wye Bridge in Monmouth and diversion arrangements and report back to the Joint Advisory Committee. The proposed closure of Wye Bridge is scheduled to commence in the Spring of 2024.

3. Letter from the Minister for Climate Change

We received a copy of a letter from Julie James AS/MS, Minister for Climate Change, Welsh Government, to the Chairs of National Park Authorities (NPA) and AONB Joint Committee Chairs (JACs).

It was noted that Welsh Government officials are developing a training package comprising three online training modules for all NPA and AONB JAC members. Each module is likely to be delivered over the autumn and winter.

The three priority areas are:

- Introduction to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (for NPA and AONB JAC members).
- Tackling the Nature and Climate Emergencies (for NPA and AONB JAC members).
- Effective Governance (for NPA members only – the National Association for AONBs is exploring options for governance training programs tailored specifically for AONBs).

We resolved that the AONB Manager would keep the Joint Advisory Committee informed of the online training modules, going forward.

4. Confirmation of Minutes

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The minutes of the Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee dated 3rd July 2023 were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

5. Annual Report 2022/23

We received a report regarding the annual report for 2022/23 on the achievements of the Wye Valley AONB Unit.

In doing so, the following information was noted:

- High levels of achievement were maintained by the AONB Unit despite the challenges and on-going impacts of Covid-19 restricting many activities and some reduced capacity due to staffing issues.
- The AONB Unit has levered in nearly £22 for every £1 of local authority contribution during 2022/23.

Having received the report, the following points were noted:

- The impact of Covid-19 is no longer having a negative impact on the work being undertaken by the AONB Unit. AONB staff have developed a hybrid working system using Microsoft Teams, which is reducing the Unit's carbon footprint.
- Alternative treatments to dispose of Japanese Knotweed are being explored such as RootWave instead of Glyphosate. However, this alternative treatment does not appear to be as effective on some of the target species. Other alternative treatments are also being explored.
- With regard to the Wye Valley AONB Unit Expenditure 2022/23, it was noted that the AONB initiatives equated to £6,073. This figure refers to the internal operating costs within the AONB Unit, such as public relations, the AONB website and social media.

We welcomed the Annual Report of AONB achievements for 2022/23.

6. Changes to AONBs

We received a report in which the Joint Advisory Committee was advised of forthcoming changes occurring to Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, particularly relating to the duties of relevant authorities and the re-branding of AONBs to National Landscapes.

In doing so, the following information was noted:

- Government amendments to the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill (LURB), announced in September 2023, strengthen the duty on relevant authorities towards conserving and enhancing natural beauty and enhances AONB Management Plans by enabling a stronger link to national targets and a requirement on partners to contribute to their delivery.

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- The LURB amendments require relevant authorities in England to ‘seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty’ of the AONB. Meanwhile, relevant authorities in Wales retain the ‘duty of regard’ to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty.
- LURB amendments also allow the Secretary of State to make provision to require relevant authorities in England “to contribute to the preparation, implementation or review” of an AONB Management Plan and for the Plan to contribute to meeting targets set under the Environment Act 2021.
- DEFRA resourcing for AONBs, particularly through the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme and Access for All funding has increased over the last two years and been consolidated until March 2025. Meanwhile DEFRA is working on a review of the funding formula for National Parks & AONBs.
- On 22nd November 2023 the National Association for AONBs (NAAONB) will host an event at the Royal Society, London, to launch when all the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty across England and Wales become National Landscapes. The following day is the NAAONB AGM and Chairs’ Conference on Ambition and Leadership. The AONB Manager is intending to represent the AONB at these events.
- The Welsh Government Minister for Climate Change is supportive of Welsh AONBs adopting the National Landscape rebrand and intends to sponsor an event in the Senedd to raise the profile of AONBs.
- Together the LURB amendments, consolidated funding and National Landscape rebrand significantly progress the Glover Landscapes Review Proposal 24 that “AONBs should be strengthened with new purposes, powers and resources, and renamed as National Landscapes.”
- The Government’s formal response to the Glover Landscapes Review is expected to be published shortly.
- The NAAONB, DEFRA and Welsh Government will be producing respective guidance on the LURB amendments and the National Landscape rebrand later in the year.

Having received the report, the following points were noted:

- The tagline ‘Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty’ will still be used below the rebranding. However, we will begin to refer to the AONB much less and move towards referencing the National Landscape, going forward.
- Each AONB will receive in the region of £3000 to cover the cost of the rebranding.

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- Discussions with Welsh Government are ongoing regarding funding.
- Discussions are being held with civil servants in DEFRA and it is hoped that sufficient resources will be provided.
- The re-branding will be bi-lingual with the logos provided through the funding from DEFRA.
- In response to a question raised regarding monitoring progress, it was noted that until we know what we will be monitoring from Natural England, responsibilities lie across a number of public bodies, not just AONBs.

We acknowledged the forthcoming changes to AONBs relating to legislation in England on the duties of relevant authorities and the national re-branding of AONBs to National Landscapes.

7. AONB Position Statements

We received a report in which the Joint Advisory Committee was asked to formally endorse two Position Statements, which intend to establish the position of the Wye Valley AONB Partnership on key issues affecting the area, helping guide the Partnership and relevant plan-making and decision-making bodies to articulate how the AONB designation should be protected, conserved and enhanced. To be made aware of intended upcoming position statements, which seek to aid all interested parties to uphold and deliver the vision and priorities contained within the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan.

In doing so, the following information was noted:

- Currently, the AONB Partnership does not have Position Statements. Position Statements provide further context, guidance and recommendations in relation to the specific Wye Valley AONB Management Plan Strategic Objectives and associated issues.
- The 'Housing in the Wye Valley AONB and its Setting' Position Statement advises housing development to be based on robust evidence of need arising from within the Protected Landscape. Currently, assessment of housing need and housing requirements are based on local authority boundaries, not the AONB boundary. This could be avoided if 'housing need' and 'housing requirements' are clearly differentiated.
- The Landscape-led Position Statement advises that development within the Wye Valley AONB and, where relevant, in its setting, should be 'landscape-led'. Ideally, there should not have to be a binary choice between conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Wye Valley AONB and planning for and permitting new development. The aspiration should be to deliver new development in a way that is compatible with and positively contributes to the AONB as a nationally designated protected landscape.

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- The Position Statements have had formal public consultation between 4th August and 29th September 2023 (inclusive), following which comments submitted have been considered and amendments made, with the revised version being brought to the Joint Advisory Committee for endorsement.
- Shared experience from the similar Position Statements for the Malvern Hills AONB has helped inform, revise and strengthen both sets of Position Statements.
- It is intended that guidance and associated Position Statements on Renewables and Dark Skies for the Wye Valley AONB will be prepared and presented at a future Joint Advisory Committee meeting. These will aim to promote good practice and assist those proposing new development in the AONB and its setting.

Having received the report, the following points were noted:

- Training will commence at the end of November 2023, with a proposed session for Herefordshire Council Planning officers.
- Training will be extended to Forest of Dean District Council officers. This will also be provided for Malvern Hills and Monmouthshire County Council Officers, going forward.
- Online training will be provided to town, community and parish councils in due course.
- The position statements are being prepared while a number of local authorities are reviewing their local plans. It is hoped that the position statements will be incorporated into the local plans, going forward.
- Via the NAAONB, AONB planning officers meet several times a year to exchange information. The AONB Planning Officer is able to gain feedback from these meetings.

We resolved to:

- (i) note the public consultation undertaken by Wye Valley AONB Unit Staff on the 'Housing in the Wye Valley AONB and its Setting' Position Statement and 'Landscape-led' Position Statement, which took place between 4th August and 29th September 2023.
- (ii) formally endorse the 'Housing in the Wye Valley AONB and its Setting' Position Statement, and its associated Appendices.
- (iii) formally endorse the 'Landscape-led Development' Position Statement, and its associated Appendices.

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(iv)note that Position Statements on Renewables and Dark Skies intend to be presented at a future Joint Advisory Committee meeting.

8. AONB Memorandum of Understanding

We received a report regarding the progress with the AONB Memorandum of Understanding between the four local authorities for 2024 – 2027.

In doing so, the following information was noted:

- The AONB Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is intended to give medium term security and commitment to the AONB Partnership.
- The current MoU ends in March 2024 and a revised three year edition, until March 2027, is being prepared between the four local authorities.
- When the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill amendments becomes law, local authorities in Wales retain the 'duty of regard' to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, whereas in England relevant authorities 'must seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty' of the AONB.
- DEFRA and Welsh Government are not signatories to the MoU but their grant offer letters are appended to the MoU. Their current AONB grant funding allocations extend to March 2025.
- Natural Resources Wales (NRW) has proposed outline offered allocations of AONB project funding until March 2027.
- The MoU includes the minimum contribution expected from the local authorities which form the foundation of the budget managed by the AONB Unit. Contributions are proposed to remain at existing levels.
- AONB leverage in 2022/23 brought in £21.80 for every £1 of Local Authority contribution.

Having received the report, the following points were noted:

- Funding requests from the local authority partners do not include inflation due to current local authority budget pressures. However, local authority partners can increase their allocation by choice.
- The funding received from each local authority partner is based on the percentage area of each authority within the AONB.

We resolved to:

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- (i) encourage the constituent local authorities to finalise and agree the AONB Memorandum of Understanding for 2024 – 2027.
- (ii) welcome the provisional allocations of funding until March 2027 from Natural Resources Wales (NRW).

9. FiPL, SDF & HCF AONB Fund update

We received a report regarding the progress of the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme, the AONB Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) and the Wye Valley AONB Fund with Herefordshire Community Foundation (HCF).

In doing so, the following information was noted:

- The DEFRA funded Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme in England has an allocation of £339,063 for 2023/24 and £362,384 for 2024/25.
- The FiPL Assessment Panel has approved grants totalling £303,675 in 2023/24 with £35,387 remaining. For 2024/5, £157,270 has already been allocated, leaving £205,113 remaining in what is understood to be the last year of the programme.
- Guidance and assistance to farmers and land managers applying to the FiPL programme is provided by Anna Stankiewicz, AONB Farming in Protected Landscapes Officer, along with Farm Advisors from the Wye & Usk Foundation and Herefordshire Meadows.
- The Welsh Government Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) currently has £82,961 allocated from the £100,000 available for 2023/24, plus £15,000 from a returned grant leaving £32,038 available. There is also £53,227 already allocated from the £100,000 available for 2024/25, leaving £46,773 available.
- Community groups, local organisations and individuals wishing to apply for the SDF can get assistance from Lucinda James, AONB Community Links Officer.
- The Wye Valley AONB Fund hosted by the Herefordshire Community Foundation (HCF) is currently closed for applications and opportunities to grow the Fund need to be sought.

Having received the report, the following points were noted:

- In response to a question raised regarding Pasture for Profit in Protected Landscapes, the AONB Manager would liaise with the AONB Farming in Protected Landscapes Officer to obtain an update and report back.

We endorsed the allocations of grants under the FiPL programme, SDF and HCF AONB Fund to date for 2023/24.

10. AONB Partnership Study Tour 2023 & Winter Seminar 2024

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We received a report regarding the success of the AONB Partnership Annual Study Tour and the proposition for a Winter Seminar on Planning in a National Landscape.

In doing so, the following information was noted:

- A total of 37 people attended the annual AONB Partnership Tour on 22nd September 2023.
- There was a good variety of representation from throughout the AONB even though the Tour was focused around the lower Wye Valley between Monmouth and Tintern.
- The tour visited a range of sites associated with social and/or land-use management initiatives supported in various ways by the AONB, including a One Planet Development, a Village Hall, two farms - one a Nature Reserve and other a youth farm charity, and Old Station Tintern.
- Feedback from attendees of the Tour has been extremely positive and the time and dedication of the speakers and hosts was greatly appreciated.
- It is proposed that a Winter Seminar is held in February or March 2024, on the theme of Planning in a National Landscape, focusing on Strategic and Development Control issues and implications for the AONB as a National Landscape.

Having received the report, the Joint Advisory Committee thanked the AONB Manager and his team for providing the AONB Partnership Tour.

We welcomed the positive feedback on the AONB Partnership Annual Study Tour and endorsed a late Winter Seminar on the theme of Planning in a National Landscape.

11. AONB Unit and Partner updates

We received a report regarding the activity of the Wye Valley AONB Unit and other partners relating to:

- NAAONB Conference & Wye Valley Field trip.
- River Wye update & Wye Catchment Partnership & Collaborations:
 - Wyescapes: food, nature, water ELMS Landscape Recovery 2 bid.
 - Wye Adapt to Climate Change Project.
- Lower Wye Nature Networks Partnership Project.
- Lower Wye Valley Tracks & Trails Strategy & Consultation.
- Green Blue Infrastructure – Herefordshire Council Mapping and Strategy.

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Having received the report, the following points were noted:

- The Wyescares: food, nature, water ELMS Landscape Recovery 2 bid intends to secure landowners' commitments to the restoration of farmland on the floodplain to increase water retention and improve water quality. If the bid is approved there will be a two-year development phase before a 20 year scheme which will be transformative for the Wye.
- The AONB Manager will provide an update regarding pollution in the River Wye at the next Joint Advisory Committee meeting.

We noted the report.

12. Dates of next meetings:

Monday 4th March 2024 at 2.00pm.

Monday 1st July 2024 at 2.00pm.

Monday 4th November 2024 at 2.00pm.

The meetings will be held in the Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford.

The meeting ended at 3.42 pm.

REVIEW OF MEMBERSHIP AND CONSTITUTION OF THE JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Purpose

To establish a Task and Finish Group to review current vacancies and the constitution of the Joint Advisory Committee and propose recommendations with regard to changes of membership and terms of reference.

Recommendations

That the JAC establish a Task and Finish Group of three to five members, supported by officers, to review current vacancies and the constitution of the Joint Advisory Committee and report back with proposed recommendations.

Key Issues

- There are a number of vacancies that have emerged in the co-opted membership of the Joint Advisory Committee.
- Recent initiatives, including the Glover Review and the Diversity & Inclusion training provided through Welsh Government, have highlighted the need for increasing diversity in public sector representation.
- The Joint Agreement as to the establishment and functions of the Wye Valley AONB JAC should be reviewed from time to time.
- A review of current vacancies and the constitution of the Joint Advisory Committee can be undertaken by a small Task and Finish Group, of three to five members supported by officers, who can report back to the JAC with proposed recommendations.

Reasons

A number of vacancies have emerged recently in the co-opted membership of the Joint Advisory Committee. These include the standing down of both the Gloucestershire and Herefordshire Voluntary Conservation Sector representatives and the dissolution of the River Wye Preservation Trust that had a seat on the JAC.

The AONB Manager was in the process of reviewing the recruitment process for a new Gloucestershire Voluntary Conservation Sector Representative when these other vacancies emerged. It therefore appears opportune to take a deeper and wider review of co-opted membership.

The recent members training provided through Welsh Government on diversity and inclusion emphasised that “there is a strong moral, legislative and business case for diversity and inclusion. The moral case is based on principles of human rights, equality, social justice, and democracy: those who govern Public Bodies should be representative of the communities that they serve. Most importantly, a whole-organisation approach to improving diversity and inclusion needs to be established.”

The 2019 Glover 'Landscape Review of National Parks and AONBs in England' included *Proposal 26: Reformed governance to inspire and secure ambition in our national landscapes and better reflect society*. The report noted that "the lack of diversity among those governing the bodies looking after our national landscapes is extremely narrow.... this is not to say there aren't brilliant and committed people doing brilliant things.... [but] they suffer from the same demographic biases as most authorities in England, lacking proper representation across age, gender, ethnicity and (dis)ability.... Every effort should be made to achieve diversity – of social background, gender, age, ethnicity, (dis)ability."

Implications

Three to five members of the JAC would be needed to sit on the Membership Review Task & Finish Group. Supported by the AONB Manager and other officers as appropriate, the Task Group would review all current vacancies, terms of reference and recruitment processes, along with the need for greater representation across age, gender, ethnicity and (dis)ability. The Group would consider requirements and options, seeking advice as necessary, and form proposals to report back to the JAC with as recommendations. Initial proposals could be presented at the next JAC, in July.

The recent training on diversity and inclusion through Welsh Government also suggested that there should be a diversity and inclusion champion on each JAC.

Some proposed changes may be achievable under the existing 'Agreement As to the establishment and functions Of the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Joint Advisory Committee'. This 'Agreement' is between the Forest of Dean District Council, Gloucestershire County Council, Herefordshire Council and Monmouthshire County Council and was last reviewed in 2009. However, there may be recommendations that would require updating the Agreement. These would have to be considered in the context of the legal priorities of the four local authorities.

Background

There is no requirement for JAC members to live within the National Landscape, but an active interest in the area is expected. JAC members are nominated by respective organisations but serve on the JAC to benefit the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and represent wider interests rather than those of a particular organisation or constituency. However, members need to take particular care to avoid prejudicing both the independence of the JAC's advice and their own position on other bodies.

Co-opted seats on the JAC are not reserved for specific organisations, although relevant organisations or sectors may be invited to recommend suitable individuals or to advertise a JAC vacancy amongst their membership.

From time to time the JAC undertakes a review of its structures and membership. The JAC Constitution 'Agreement' was last reviewed in 2009. A Governance Review was undertaken in 2018 but the recommendations were not fully adopted due to the impacts of the Covid Pandemic.

NATIONAL LANDSCAPE TEAM WORK PROGRAMME 2024/2025

Purpose

To seek members' approval for the proposed outline business plan for the Wye Valley National Landscape Team during the forthcoming financial year, and acknowledge the need to roll forward of the existing Memorandum of Understanding for the National Landscape Team until a revised version is adopted by the constituent Local Authorities.

Recommendations

That the JAC

- A. Endorses the outline Work Programme for the National Landscape Team for 2024/2025.
- B. Notes the need to roll forward of the existing Memorandum of Understanding for the National Landscape Team until the constituent Local Authorities have adopted a revised version.

Key Issues

- The attached table sets out the proposed business plan for the National Landscape Team in the form of the outline Work Programme 2024/2025.
- The Work Programme remains 'draft' as final confirmation is awaited from DEFRA on new capital funding for 2024/25.
- The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the four constituent local authorities is intended to give medium term security and commitment to the National Landscape Partnership.
- The current MoU ends in March 2024 and a revised three year edition is being prepared, meanwhile it is prudent to extend the existing version for up to 12 months until the revised version is adopted and signed by the four local authorities.
- Work Programme priorities for 2024/2025 include the on-going development of the Nature Recovery Plan, Species Action Plans and Climate Action Plan; promotion and delivery of what is currently the final year of the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) grant programme in England; the distribution and administration of grants through the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) and Herefordshire Community Foundation Wye Valley National Landscape Fund; the delivery of the final year of projects funded through the 3-year tranche of Welsh Government's Sustainable Landscapes Sustainable Places (SLSP) programme; including ongoing control of Invasive Non-Native Species, support for Village Halls and enhancements to the Wye Valley Walk, in preparation for the route's 50th Anniversary in 2025; and continuing a range of existing activities and projects; while

retaining enough flexibility to pursue new funding opportunities and develop new initiatives.

- The National Landscape Team core budget for 2024/5, as presented to the National Landscape Steering Group, is £457,000 with additional funding programmes, grants and match funding anticipated to exceed £835,000 levered into the designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty during the year.

Reasons

This will be the third and final year of the existing funding agreements for the Wye Valley National Landscape Team from both DEFRA and Welsh Government. However, both Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and Gloucestershire County Council have confirmed their contributions for the next three years. Discussions are progressing with both DEFRA and Welsh Government on future allocations based on robust funding formulae. While this currently creates a fiscal cliff in March 2025, it is anticipated that relative stability and continuity of funding will be established well in advance of the end of the next Financial Year. This will enable the National Landscape Team and the constituent local authorities to plan ahead and consolidate team capacity. The Memorandum of Understanding is similarly intended to give medium term security and commitment to the National Landscape Partnership, including outlining the local authorities' contributions.

Implications

The National Landscape Team core budget for 2024-25 has been estimated at £457,000 based on current core contributions, which are mostly flat-line. This is augmented by the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) and Sustainable Landscapes Sustainable Places (SLSP) programmes in England and Wales respectively, and the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) in Wales which between them also lever in varying levels of match funding into the AONB. DEFRA also provide Access for All funding and have announced new capital funding for National Landscapes, of which the details are still awaited. Various partnership projects also increase the capacity and reach of the National Landscape Partnership, through the development and delivery of new initiatives and funding bids to further the implementation of the AONB Management Plan, such as the Lottery funded Wye Adapt to Climate Change project run jointly with Herefordshire and Radnorshire Wildlife Trusts.

The draft Work Programme incorporates this range of externally funded projects, grants and match funding initiatives which add value in excess of £835,000 through the year to the core activities. This will take the turnover of the National Landscape Team Business Plan to about £1.3million. There is further additional leverage and expenditure in the National Landscape through the public, private and third sector investment and match funding to the various projects and grant schemes, particularly FiPL and SDF.

The National Landscape Team is currently working on a new monitoring scheme to better report on activities and outcomes arising from the work programme.

It is recognised that if the new DEFRA & Welsh Government funding agreements are not provided in a timely way before April 2025 and the revised Memorandum of Understanding is not adopted then there will be significant uncertainty. This would impact the effectiveness of the National Landscape Team, and the ability of the Partnership to seek to further the purposes of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty designation beyond March 2025.

National Landscape Team Initiatives / activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outputs 	Resource: budget £ <i>[source]</i> Key Staff %	Outcomes AONB Management Plan 2021-2026 Strategic Objectives	Metric (see ManPlan Sec13, p114)	By when
Nature				
Nature Recovery & Landscape connectivity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop AONB Nature Recovery Plan. Complete Species Action Plans for Hedgehogs, River (Water Crowfoot), Woodland (Woodland Butterfly assemblage) and Grassland (Bumblebee assemblage). Manage control of Invasive Non Native Species (INNS) particularly Japanese Knotweed, Himalayan Balsam and American Skunk Cabbage through Wye Invasive Species Programme (WISP) Promotion of Natural Flood Management (NFM), Green Infrastructure (GI) & Riparian Trees initiatives working with local land owners, managers & stakeholders Organise regular volunteer task days, including on partner sites and Reserves Collaborate and support landscape connectivity initiatives including Wyescapes and Severn Treescapes. Developed Landscape Enhancement Initiative (LEI) bid for the National Grid Visual Improvement Programme (VIP) for area between Ross & Goodrich with partners & landowners Continue liaison with Herefordshire Meadows Network, Monmouthshire Meadows and Parish Grassland Project. Develop and support partnership projects that deliver landscape scale conservation activity and initiatives linked to the Special Qualities within and adjoining the AONB. 	<i>[Core, FiPL, NRW, SDF, SLSP, NLHF, LEI]</i> NRO 50% PO 38% DO 15% CLO 10% IO 8% AM 4% BSA 3% FO 2%	WV-L1 Promote and develop policies and initiatives to conserve, enhance, restore or create the features and elements that maintain the Special Qualities, landscape character and natural beauty of the AONB. Ensure their sustainable management and mitigate, reduce or remove detrimental features WV-L2 Encourage and enhance appropriate landscape scale and green infrastructure action by all particularly on consolidating ecosystem services and positively contributing to habitat connectivity that allows wildlife to adapt to the effects of climate change WV-L4 Ensure the establishment and collection of sufficiently comprehensive baseline data to monitor landscape condition and direction of change WV-B2 Encourage and support measures that contribute to the management of all statutory designated sites and County local/key wildlife sites so that they are in favourable condition and within robust ecological networks WV-B3 Promote the adoption of schemes and initiatives that sustain, enhance and recover the characteristic biodiversity of the AONB, and that enable ecological systems, networks and natural processes to accommodate and adapt to climate and other environmental change, including through nature based solutions and landscape scale habitat connectivity WV-B4 Identify species and diseases considered to be detrimental to the biodiversity value of the AONB and encourage their monitoring, management and, where appropriate, their control WV-F4 Support the development of and funding for new skills, farming practices and farm-based activities that are compatible with the aims of AONB designation, and encourage and support traditional skills such as hay making, hedge laying, dry stone walling, woodland and coppice management, riparian tree works etc. that contribute to the maintenance of the Special Qualities of the AONB WV-W3 Support the development of employment and skills and markets for local timber and woodland produce WV-W4 Support the monitoring, management and where appropriate, control of diseases, pests and other threats, which may cause substantial mortality in tree species and woodland habitats and seek to mitigate the landscape impact of any loss WV-P3 Encourage and assist partners with initiatives that deliver the Management Plan, or other initiatives where the objectives are consistent with the purposes of the AONB designation, and utilise existing resources and seek new resources to implement the AONB Management Plan WV-P4 Encourage Section 85 organisations, under the CRoW Act, to have co-ordinated policies to progress the purposes of the AONB designation and to make commitments in	1.a) 1.b) 1.c) 3.a) 3.b) 3.d) 4.a) 4.b) 5.a) 6.c) 6.d) 6.e)	Q1-3 Q4

National Landscape Team Initiatives / activities • Outputs	Resource: budget £ [source] Key Staff %	Outcomes AONB Management Plan 2021-2026 Strategic Objectives	Metric (see ManPlan Sec13, p114)	By when
		their annual business plans to specific delivery contributions that enable the AONB work programme		
Climate				
Climate Emergency Action <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare & implement action plan from Carbon Neutral Designated Landscapes Organisation assessment Develop action plan from Wales Designated Landscapes Carbon Footprint Programme Continue Peatland Restoration initiatives particularly at Cleddon Bog SSSI Support grassland sequestration investigations with Herefordshire Meadows and Floodplain Meadows Partnership 	[Core, SLSP, NRW, FIPL] DO 8% PO 5% NRO 5% CLO 3% AM 2%	WV-L1 Promote and develop policies and initiatives to conserve, enhance, restore or create the features and elements that maintain the Special Qualities, landscape character and natural beauty of the AONB. Ensure their sustainable management and mitigate, reduce or remove detrimental features WV-L2 Encourage and enhance appropriate landscape scale and green infrastructure action by all particularly on consolidating ecosystem services and positively contributing to habitat connectivity that allows wildlife to adapt to the effects of climate change WV-L4 Ensure the establishment and collection of sufficiently comprehensive baseline data to monitor landscape condition and direction of change WV-B2 Encourage and support measures that contribute to the management of all statutory designated sites and County local/key wildlife sites so that they are in favourable condition and within robust ecological networks WV-B3 Promote the adoption of schemes and initiatives that sustain, enhance and recover the characteristic biodiversity of the AONB, and that enable ecological systems, networks and natural processes to accommodate and adapt to climate and other environmental change, including through nature based solutions and landscape scale habitat connectivity WV-W4 Support the monitoring, management and where appropriate, control of diseases, pests and other threats, which may cause substantial mortality in tree species and woodland habitats and seek to mitigate the landscape impact of any loss WV-P3 Encourage and assist partners with initiatives that deliver the Management Plan, or other initiatives where the objectives are consistent with the purposes of the AONB designation, and utilise existing resources and seek new resources to implement the AONB Management Plan WV-P5 Develop and promote the AONB as a model of sustainable development, landscape management, transportation, access and rural regeneration through exemplary initiatives setting standards for other areas	1.a) 4.a) 4.b) 5.a) 6.c) 6.d)	Q1-3 Q4
Undergrounding Continue working with National Grid & local communities to identify low-voltage power-lines within the AONB suitable for undergrounding, via	[Core, National Grid] DO 8%	WV-U2 Encourage further under-grounding of existing and proposed power and telephone lines, where these do not conflict with any SAC, and resist new overhead lines where skylines or important views are affected WV-P4 Encourage Section 85 organisations, under the CRoW Act, to have co-ordinated policies to progress the purposes of the AONB designation and to make	1.d) 4.a)	Q1-3 Q4

National Landscape Team Initiatives / activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outputs 	Resource: budget £ <i>[source]</i> Key Staff %	Outcomes AONB Management Plan 2021-2026 Strategic Objectives	Metric (see ManPlan Sec13, p114)	By when
South Wales and the West Midlands Protected Landscape Undergrounding groups.		commitments in their annual business plans to specific delivery contributions that enable the AONB work programme		
People				
Wye Valley Walk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Wye Valley Walk Partnership Prepare for 50th Anniversary programme Maintain new website www.wyevalleywalk.org Manage on-line Passport scheme Continue Piercefield Walk enhancements with Gwent Wildlife Trust, MCC PRoW and landowner Develop Pathcare / Friends of the Wye Valley Walk scheme of volunteers in liaison with PRoW teams. Audit & co-ordinate enhancement of way-marking, interpretation and route infrastructure Collate route counter data & review options Complete review Cicerone Route Guide Facilitate future options for Lydbrook Bridge and Redbrook Bridge. Progress Wyesham riverbank revetment 	[Core, DEFRA, SLSP] IO 10% CLO 7% AM 3% PO 3% BSA 2%	WV-S1 Encourage and promote the AONB as a sustainable tourism destination with forms of tourism activity and development that are based on the conservation, enhancement and enjoyment of the Special Qualities and features of the AONB WV-S2 Promote the improvement of the visitor experience, particularly at the most heavily visited sites, and facilitate the opportunity for visitors to explore and discover other appropriate but less used locations throughout the AONB, thus spreading demand and balancing pressures across sites where this does not conflict with the Special Qualities of the AONB and the SACs WV-R1 Encourage and promote recreational pursuits and responsible access compatible with the AONB purposes, particularly linking sustainable transport and town and village facilities. Associated development and new access to land should be subject to WV-D2 & -D3 WV-P5 Develop and promote the AONB as a model of sustainable development, landscape management, transportation, access and rural regeneration through exemplary initiatives setting standards for other areas	1.c) 3.a) 3.d) 4.a) 6.c) 6.d) #counter data #web-stats	Q1-3 Q4
Removing Barriers & Access for All <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review & republish 'Easy Access' walks Develop Willow Walk for all terrain wheelchairs from Ross to Brampton Abbots. Support 'Miles without Stiles' replacement of footpath stiles with kissing-gates by volunteers and local walking groups 	[Core, DEFRA] CLO 5% IO 2% PO 2% BSA 2% AM 1%			

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National Landscape Team Initiatives / activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outputs 	Resource: budget £ <i>[source]</i> Key Staff %	Outcomes AONB Management Plan 2021-2026 Strategic Objectives	Metric (see ManPlan Sec13, p114)	By when
Overlooking the Wye legacy Continue to develop heritage & Community projects as part of the legacy of the Overlooking the Wye Landscape Partnership Scheme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue Cleddon Falls & Wordsworth Walk enhancements with landowner(s) Review & reprint of Walks leaflets Audit and repair &/or replace Overlooking the Wye infrastructure Enhance access from Tintern to Devil's Pulpit 	<i>[Core, OLW, DEFRA, SLSP]</i> PO 5% BSA 4% DO 3% IO 3% AM 2%	WV-H1 Initiate and encourage schemes, policy development, advice and sympathetic management through partnerships and positive action to conserve, enhance and promote the historic environment, in conjunction with landowners, national agencies and other relevant organisations WV-H3 Promote the understanding and enjoyment of the cultural heritage and historic environment WV-P5 Develop and promote the AONB as a model of sustainable development, landscape management, transportation, access and rural regeneration through exemplary initiatives setting standards for other areas	1.c) 2.a) 2.b) 2.c) 3.a) 3.b) 4.a) 4.b) 6.c) 6.d)	Q1-3 Q4
Offa's Dyke Collaboratory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate opportunities for future cross border partnership projects along the corridor of Offa's Dyke, promoting archaeological research and investigation into the landscape significance of the 8th century monument Participate in Collaboratory conferences, meetings and events Support community based research and events. 	<i>[Core]</i> AM 2%	WV-H1 Initiate and encourage schemes, policy development, advice and sympathetic management through partnerships and positive action to conserve, enhance and promote the historic environment, in conjunction with landowners, national agencies and other relevant organisations	1.c) 2.a) 2.b) 2.c) 3.a) 4.a) 4.b) 6.d) 6.e)	Q1-3 Q4
Communications & social media <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular social media (SM) posts e.g. Facebook, Instagram and X (twitter) On-going updating and revision of https://www.wyevalley-nl.org.uk/ . Regular publication of on-line National Landscape Partnership newsletter 'Picturesque' Revise and publish National Landscape Map & Guide 	<i>[Core, DEFRA, SLSP]</i> IO 45% PO 3% BSA 3%	WV-C2 Promote awareness, appreciation of, and pride in the lower Wye Valley, the Special Qualities and features of the Wye Valley AONB and the beneficial aspects for local people of living and working in a nationally protected landscape WV-A1 Increase the profile of the Wye Valley AONB, promoting awareness and understanding of the designation and the Special Qualities of the AONB, through communication with, and interpretation for, residents, visitors, organisations and businesses, including embedding cultural and artistic activities into the conservation and enhancement of the AONB and measure effectiveness	3.f) #SM stats	Q1-3 Q4
Outreach Activities Promote the National Landscape through <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talks/presentations to local groups 	<i>[Core]</i> IO 8%	WV-C2 Promote awareness, appreciation of, and pride in the lower Wye Valley, the Special Qualities and features of the Wye Valley AONB and the beneficial aspects for local people of living and working in a nationally protected landscape	3.a) 3.b) 3.c)	Q1-3 Q4

National Landscape Team Initiatives / activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outputs 	Resource: budget £ <i>[source]</i> Key Staff %	Outcomes AONB Management Plan 2021-2026 Strategic Objectives	Metric (see ManPlan Sec13, p114)	By when
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stands at relevant shows. Promote, sponsor &/or lead guided walks, events, activities and countryside craft /rural skills courses in and around the AONB Support the Wye Valley River Festival CIC 	CLO 5% PO 4% NRO 4%	WV-E4 Raise awareness of the value of the AONB and the importance of retaining a high quality environment in attracting and retaining entrepreneurs, relocating businesses, inward investment and skilled personnel WV-A1 Increase the profile of the Wye Valley AONB, promoting awareness and understanding of the designation and the Special Qualities of the AONB, through communication with, and interpretation for, residents, visitors, organisations and businesses, including embedding cultural and artistic activities into the conservation and enhancement of the AONB and measure effectiveness	3.d)	
Youth Rangers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review programme and further opportunities to continue the model of engaging young people in conservation and heritage Train new Leaders as required/appropriate 	<i>[Core, HCF NLF]</i> CLO 15% NRO 4%	WV-F4 Support the development of and funding for new skills, farming practices and farm-based activities that are compatible with the aims of AONB designation, and encourage and support traditional skills such as hay making, hedge laying, dry stone walling, woodland and coppice management, riparian tree works etc. that contribute to the maintenance of the Special Qualities of the AONB WV-C2 Promote awareness, appreciation of, and pride in the lower Wye Valley, the Special Qualities and features of the Wye Valley AONB and the beneficial aspects for local people of living and working in a nationally protected landscape WV-P6 Inform and engage all relevant interests, especially local communities, in issues and decisions affecting the AONB	3.a) 3.b) 3.c) 3.d) 4.a)	Q3 Q4
Governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service and set agendas for JAC, TOWP and Steering Group Organise National Landscape Partnership Annual Study Tour of key sites &/or issues in late September 2024 Run National Landscape Partnership Seminar/forum in winter/spring 2025 Complete Good Governance Review 	<i>[Core]</i> AM 18% DO 4% BSA 3%	WV-P1 Maintain and develop effective partnerships and administrative arrangements to lead and co-ordinate the management of the AONB and develop the AONB Partnership as an effective forum for initiating and promoting discussion on important issues affecting the AONB WV-P2 Sustain and enhance local and national government funding and support for the AONB Unit to add value to delivery of the AONB purposes WV-P6 Inform and engage all relevant interests, especially local communities, in issues and decisions affecting the AONB WV-P7 Encourage partners to be champions and ambassadors for the AONB in their contact with other interests, and ensure those interests recognise and consider the Management Plan and AONB work programme when relating to the area	3.b)	Q1-3 Q4
Local Partnerships & Collaboration Influence & attend partnerships as appropriate; eg: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Nature Partnerships (LNP) in Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Herefordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) Steering Group 	<i>[Core]</i> AM 8% DO 8%	WV-R2 Assist the resolving of conflicts, real and perceived, between recreation, conservation and local interests, including other economic activities, and between different recreation interest groups in relation to the purposes of the AONB designation WV-P1 Maintain and develop effective partnerships and administrative arrangements to lead and co-ordinate the management of the AONB and develop the AONB Partnership as an effective forum for initiating and promoting discussion on important issues affecting the AONB	4.a) 4.b) 6.c) 6.d)	Q1-3 Q4

National Landscape Team Initiatives / activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outputs 	Resource: budget £ [source] Key Staff %	Outcomes AONB Management Plan 2021-2026 Strategic Objectives	Metric (see ManPlan Sec13, p114)	By when
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wye Catchment Partnership (WCP) & WCP Steering Group Wye Navigation Advisory Committee (WyeNAC) Farm Herefordshire Steering Group Wye Valley & Forest of Dean Tourism Association, Cotswolds Plus Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP), South East Wales Tourism Forum, Visit Monmouthshire and Visit Herefordshire Wye Valley River Festival CIC Advisory Board Gwent Green Grid Partnership Monmouthshire Local Access Forum Monmouthshire Wye Valley Villages Delivery Group Support Town, Parish & Community Councils with advice & guidance as appropriate 		WV-P3 Encourage and assist partners with initiatives that deliver the Management Plan, or other initiatives where the objectives are consistent with the purposes of the AONB designation, and utilise existing resources and seek new resources to implement the AONB Management Plan WV-P4 Encourage Section 85 organisations, under the CRoW Act, to have co-ordinated policies to progress the purposes of the AONB designation and to make commitments in their annual business plans to specific delivery contributions that enable the AONB work programme WV-P5 Develop and promote the AONB as a model of sustainable development, landscape management, transportation, access and rural regeneration through exemplary initiatives setting standards for other areas WV-P6 Inform and engage all relevant interests, especially local communities, in issues and decisions affecting the AONB WV-P7 Encourage partners to be champions and ambassadors for the AONB in their contact with other interests, and ensure those interests recognise and consider the Management Plan and AONB work programme when relating to the area		
National Collaboration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and engage with the National Landscapes Association (NLA) and attend appropriate seminars & events, including Lead Officers' Meeting, National Conference, Chairs' Conference & AGM. Work with Welsh Government and Tirweddau Cymru Landscape Wales (National Designated Landscapes Partnership) and other stakeholders, including NRW & NLA Work with DEFRA, Natural England, NLA and others to progress the Action Plan for Protected Landscapes and the Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP23). 	[Core] AM 8% DO 4%	WV-P4 Encourage Section 85 organisations, under the CRoW Act, to have co-ordinated policies to progress the purposes of the AONB designation and to make commitments in their annual business plans to specific delivery contributions that enable the AONB work programme WV-P5 Develop and promote the AONB as a model of sustainable development, landscape management, transportation, access and rural regeneration through exemplary initiatives setting standards for other areas WV-P9 Share knowledge and skills in protected area management locally, regionally, nationally and globally as appropriate	4.b) 6.b) 6.c)	Q1-3 Q4
Place				

National Landscape Team Initiatives / activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outputs 	Resource: budget £ <i>[source]</i> Key Staff %	Outcomes AONB Management Plan 2021-2026 Strategic Objectives	Metric (see ManPlan Sec13, p114)	By when
AONB Management Plan 2021-2026 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publicise and promote Wye Valley AONB Management Plan Monitor use of Management Plan in Planning Applications, Public Inquiries and by stakeholders 	[Core] AM 9% SPO 4% DO 4%	WV-L1 Promote and develop policies and initiatives to conserve, enhance, restore or create the features and elements that maintain the Special Qualities, landscape character and natural beauty of the AONB. Ensure their sustainable management and mitigate, reduce or remove detrimental features WV-P3 Encourage and assist partners with initiatives that deliver the Management Plan, or other initiatives where the objectives are consistent with the purposes of the AONB designation, and utilise existing resources and seek new resources to implement the AONB Management Plan	3.e) 5.a) 5.b) 5.c) 5.d) 5.e) 5.f)	Q1-3 Q4
AONB Planning & Development Control <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comment on relevant Planning Applications and strategic planning documents Annually monitor and review development trends and the approach taken by planning authorities to issues that affect the AONB Engage in development and consultation on national strategy in liaison with NLA Prepare, consult on and finalise Position Statements on Renewables and Dark Skies Deliver CPD & training for LA Planning staff & members Monitor Planning support & activity jointly with Malvern Hills National Landscape Partnership. 	[Core] SPO 75% AM 5%	WV-D1 Ensure a consistent and coherent framework of planning policies relating to the AONB is fully reflected in the statutory land use planning documents and their effectiveness monitored WV-D2 Encourage and support high standards of design, materials, energy efficiency, drainage, landscaping and Green Infrastructure in all developments, including Permitted Development, to ensure greater sustainability and decarbonisation, and that they complement, conserve and enhance the local landscape character and distinctiveness including scale and setting and benefit or enhance the natural environment WV-D3 Resist inappropriate development which will create a persistent and dominant feature out of keeping with the landscape of the AONB and/or if it damages Special Qualities in the AONB, including through high levels of noise and/or light pollution or any SAC, SPA or Ramsar site or other sites designated as environmentally important WV-P4 Encourage Section 85 organisations, under the CRoW Act, to have co-ordinated policies to progress the purposes of the AONB designation and to make commitments in their annual business plans to specific delivery contributions that enable the AONB work programme	5.a) 5.b) 5.c) 5.d) 5.e)	Q1-3 Q4
Monitoring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing updating of the National Landscape GIS and State of the AONB data, Complete Phase 1 Habitat Survey mapping & digitising Promote use of the Nature Recovery Network map, and review as appropriate Investigate opportunities to update heritage, tourism and recreation monitoring. Monitor and review implementation of the AONB Management Plan 	[Core] DO 7% NRO 5% IO 5% FO 5% CLO 3% BSA 3% PO 3% SPO 3% AM 2%	WV-L4 Ensure the establishment and collection of sufficiently comprehensive baseline data to monitor landscape condition and direction of change WV-B5 Support the identification and monitoring of key indicator species and priority species and habitats, in partnership with conservation organisations, relevant individuals and the Local Biological Record Centres WV-H2 Promote establishment of baseline data to monitor change and improve the local databases of historic landscape assessments, conservation areas, locally important buildings, buildings at risk, ancient trees, heritage features and sites in the AONB in conjunction with Local Planning Authorities, local archaeological trusts and individuals	1-6	Q1-3 Q4

National Landscape Team Initiatives / activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outputs 	Resource: budget £ <i>[source]</i> Key Staff %	Outcomes AONB Management Plan 2021-2026 Strategic Objectives	Metric (see ManPlan Sec13, p114)	By when
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake Fixed point photography across the National Landscape 		WV-S3 Ensure adequate provision of co-ordinated tourism data and visitor engagement to inform strategic and practical decision making on conserving or enhancing the Special Qualities of the AONB WV-P8 Develop and co-ordinate the acquisition and analysis of data across the AONB, to inform priority setting, planning, implementation and monitoring of change affecting the natural beauty, including developing a better understanding of the likely impacts of climate change on the landscape of the Wye Valley AONB and supporting mitigation and adaption actions		
Funding and resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare grant bids and claims for NRW, Welsh Government and DEFRA, and other funding bodies as required. Continue pursuing funding and develop opportunities for external funding and securing sources for strategic and partnership projects Develop fundraising campaign for HCF Wye Valley National Landscape Fund 	<i>[Core]</i> BSA 45% AM 8% DO 7% PO 3% CLO 2%	WV-P1 Maintain and develop effective partnerships and administrative arrangements to lead and co-ordinate the management of the AONB and develop the AONB Partnership as an effective forum for initiating and promoting discussion on important issues affecting the AONB WV-P2 Sustain and enhance local and national government funding and support for the AONB Unit to add value to delivery of the AONB purposes WV-P3 Encourage and assist partners with initiatives that deliver the Management Plan, or other initiatives where the objectives are consistent with the purposes of the AONB designation, and utilise existing resources and seek new resources to implement the AONB Management Plan	6.a) 6.b) 6.c) 6.d) 6.e)	Q1-3 Q4
Work placements Support the needs of student placements/group projects. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate new under-graduate and post-graduate research opportunities 	<i>[Core]</i> all	WV-P5 Develop and promote the AONB as a model of sustainable development, landscape management, transportation, access and rural regeneration through exemplary initiatives setting standards for other areas WV-P9 Share knowledge and skills in protected area management locally, regionally, nationally and globally as appropriate	3.a) 3.c)	Q1-3 Q4
Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide advice & guidance, as directed by DEFRA, to farmers and land managers to develop applications to help deliver bigger and better outcomes under the themes of Climate, Nature, People and Place. Service the Local Assessment Panel in determining applications and allocating funding. Manage delegated grants (<£5k) 	<i>[FiPL]</i> FO 75% DO 15% BSA 8% AM 3%	WV-L5 Support measures which increase public awareness and appreciation of the natural beauty and importance of the Wye Valley AONB WV-F1 Encourage farmers and landowners to develop and adopt sustainable management practices that conserve or enhance the features, Special Qualities and natural beauty of the Wye Valley AONB WV-F2 Influence policy on, and encourage the maximum uptake of, agri-environment and other appropriate schemes, including support for small-holders, where they progress the conservation or enhancement of the natural beauty, biodiversity, historic environment and Special Qualities of the AONB, particularly through Catchment Sensitive Farming and mixed farming of resilient, sustainable and low-GHG emission systems	1.a) 5.f) 6.b) 6.c) 6.d) #DEFRA	Q1-3 Q4

National Landscape Team Initiatives / activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outputs 	Resource: budget £ <i>[source]</i> Key Staff %	Outcomes AONB Management Plan 2021-2026 Strategic Objectives	Metric (see ManPlan Sec13, p114)	By when
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administer grant payments and monitor and report to DEFRA Review the AONB Farming Award and present to a notable project or land manager. 		WV-F3 Identify good agricultural practices that are appropriate to the challenges facing the farmers of the AONB and disseminate through networks, partnerships and training. WV-F4 Support the development of and funding for new skills, farming practices and farm-based activities that are compatible with the aims of AONB designation, and encourage and support traditional skills such as hay making, hedge laying, dry stone walling, woodland and coppice management, riparian tree works etc. that contribute to the maintenance of the Special Qualities of the AONB WV-F5 Promote a wider understanding of the value of farming to the landscape and economy of the AONB WV-C2 Promote awareness, appreciation of, and pride in the lower Wye Valley, the Special Qualities and features of the Wye Valley AONB and the beneficial aspects for local people of living and working in a nationally protected landscape WV-E2 Raise awareness of good practice and encourage local businesses in the AONB to take opportunities to become more environmentally, socially and economically sustainable, particularly in ways that sustain the natural beauty of the area		
Sustainable Landscapes Sustainable Places (SLSP) Deliver & manage scheme: Nature Recovery:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lower Wye Valley Nature Recovery Initiatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invasive non-native species (INNS) control Landscape Connectivity Species Action Plans esp. Orchards project Sustainable Tourism:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lower Wye Valley Tourism & Access Improvements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wye Valley Walk enhancements: Wyesham, Piercefield & 50th anniversary programme Integrated Access Strategy Decarbonisation & Supporting Communities:-	<i>[SLSP]</i> PO 20%, AM 15% CLO 8% BSA 8% NRO 8% DO 7% IO 3%	WV-L1 Promote and develop policies and initiatives to conserve, enhance, restore or create the features and elements that maintain the Special Qualities, landscape character and natural beauty of the AONB. Ensure their sustainable management and mitigate, reduce or remove detrimental features WV-C1 Encourage community led initiatives that maintain the diversity, sustainability and quality of rural community life and/or that stimulate investment, local employment, decarbonisation and retain or improve facilities and services for local people, subject to WV-D2 and WV-D3 WV-S2 Promote the improvement of the visitor experience, particularly at the most heavily visited sites, and facilitate the opportunity for visitors to explore and discover other appropriate but less used locations throughout the AONB, thus spreading demand and balancing pressures across sites where this does not conflict with the Special Qualities of the AONB and the SACs WV-S4 Encourage the mitigation and/or reduction of the adverse impacts of existing tourism activity and attractions, particularly where they are concentrated around certain locations or sites, and/or those that fall outside the aims of conservation, enhancement and enjoyment of the Special Qualities and features of the AONB and decarbonisation. Highest priority will be given to addressing the issues in the Symonds Yat and Tintern areas WV-R4 Assist in identifying gaps in access and recreational provision, including for under-represented and minority groups, and work with appropriate bodies and	1.a) 3.b) 3.d) 4.a) 5.a) 6.c) 6.d) #WG	Q1-3 Q4

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National Landscape Team Initiatives / activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outputs 	Resource: budget £ [source] Key Staff %	Outcomes AONB Management Plan 2021-2026 Strategic Objectives	Metric (see ManPlan Sec13, p114)	By when
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lower Wye Valley Village Halls Energy efficiency & Hub development Engagement in collaborative projects across multiple Designated Landscapes:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wales Dark Skies Education Resources Programme 		stakeholders to support and promote access enhancements and improved access for all, where this does not conflict with the Special Qualities of the AONB and the SACs		
Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion of SDF to potential applicants Assist potential applicants with application process and project development Service SDF Assessment Panel for allocating SDF funds. Manage delegated grants and Landscape & Biodiversity Enhancement Grants (<£3k) Training for SDF Assessment Panel members Administration of grant scheme and reporting to Welsh Government 	[SDF] CLO 20% NRO 10% BSA 8% AM 3% IO 3% PO 3%	WV-L1 Promote and develop policies and initiatives to conserve, enhance, restore or create the features and elements that maintain the Special Qualities, landscape character and natural beauty of the AONB. Ensure their sustainable management and mitigate, reduce or remove detrimental features WV-B3 Promote the adoption of schemes and initiatives that sustain, enhance and recover the characteristic biodiversity of the AONB, and that enable ecological systems, networks and natural processes to accommodate and adapt to climate and other environmental change, including through nature based solutions and landscape scale habitat connectivity WV-C1 Encourage community led initiatives that maintain the diversity, sustainability and quality of rural community life and/or that stimulate investment, local employment, decarbonisation and retain or improve facilities and services for local people, subject to WV-D2 and WV-D3	1.a) 3.a) 3.c) 3.d) 4.b) 5.a) 6.c) 6.d) 6.e) #WG	Q1-3 Q4
Wye Valley National Landscape Fund with Herefordshire Community Foundation (HCF) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote Wye Valley National Landscape Fund with HCF to potential applicants Assist potential applicants with application process and project development Collate applications for the SDF Assessment Panel and liaise with HCF Service SDF Assessment Panel recommending allocations to HCF. 	[Core, HCF NLF] CLO 7% AM 2%	WV-L1 Promote and develop policies and initiatives to conserve, enhance, restore or create the features and elements that maintain the Special Qualities, landscape character and natural beauty of the AONB. Ensure their sustainable management and mitigate, reduce or remove detrimental features WV-B3 Promote the adoption of schemes and initiatives that sustain, enhance and recover the characteristic biodiversity of the AONB, and that enable ecological systems, networks and natural processes to accommodate and adapt to climate and other environmental change, including through nature based solutions and landscape scale habitat connectivity WV-C1 Encourage community led initiatives that maintain the diversity, sustainability and quality of rural community life and/or that stimulate investment, local employment, decarbonisation and retain or improve facilities and services for local people, subject to WV-D2 and WV-D3	1.a) 3.a) 3.d) 4.b) 6.c) 6.d) 6.e)	Q1-3 Q4

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY NATIONAL LANDSCAPE
AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

4th March 2024

PLANNING GUIDANCE AND POSITION STATEMENTS

Purpose

To endorse two draft Position Statements for public consultation, which intend to establish the position of the Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership on key issues affecting the area. Position Statements help guide the Partnership and relevant plan-making and decision-making bodies to articulate how the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) designation should be protected, conserved and enhanced, in upholding and delivering the vision, priorities and Strategic Objectives of the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan 2021-2026.

Recommendations

That the JAC:

- a) Discuss, amend (if necessary) and endorse the 'Renewable Energy in the Wye Valley National Landscape and its Setting' Position Statement, and associated Appendices, as a consultation draft;
- b) Discuss, amend (if necessary) and endorse the 'Dark Skies and Artificial Light Pollution' Position Statement, and its associated Appendices, as a consultation draft;
- c) Agree that if future 'non-material' amendments are required, as necessary, that these can be made by Wye Valley National Landscape Team, in consultation with the Wye Valley National Landscape Team Manager;
- d) Agree a formal review date of both Position Statements once endorsed to take place every five years unless otherwise amended.

Key Issues

- Position Statements provide further context, guidance and recommendations in relation to the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan Strategic Objectives and associated issues.
- The two draft Position Statements will have respective formal public consultation periods, following which comments submitted will be considered and amendments made.
- Both revised 'post-consultation' versions will then being brought to the JAC for endorsement in due course.

- Shared experience from the similar Position Statements from the Malvern Hills National Landscape has helped inform both Position Statements.

Reasons

Position Statements establish the position of the Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership on key issues affecting the area, helping guide the Partnership and relevant plan-making and decision-making bodies to articulate how the designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) can be protected, conserved and enhanced. They provide further context, guidance and recommendations in relation to the specific AONB Management Plan Strategic Objectives and associated issues. They do not create new policies. Adoption of Position Statements has become increasingly commonplace across Nationally Protected Landscapes, including the Cotswolds and Malvern Hills National Landscapes.

Implications

Once the Position Statements have been finalised and endorsed, the National Landscape Planning Officer will thereafter use them and reference them in consultation responses to development management applications, as well as Strategic Planning consultation responses. The Levelling Up & Regeneration Act 2023 amended the ‘duty’ on public bodies (in England) “to seek to further the purposes of designation”. Therefore consideration should be given to how the National Landscape Partnership monitors development management decision-making within the Wye Valley National Landscape, to help demonstrate the effectiveness of the Position Statements and other policy and guidance in supporting Local Planning Authority decision-making.

Position Statement on Renewable Energy in the Wye Valley National Landscape and its Setting

This draft Position Statement seeks to expand on the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan by providing guidance and recommendation on how we can plan positively for renewable energy provision within the National Landscape and its Setting. The Position Statement identifies six main types of renewable energy: heat pumps; biomass; hydropower; solar energy; wind energy; and battery storage. In summary and in principle, the recommendations advise that the Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership would be supportive of all of these forms of renewable energy at a micro-scale (i.e. less than 0.5ha), provided relevant considerations have been adequately addressed. Small-scale forms of renewable energy (between 0.5ha-5ha), should be considered on a case-by-case basis with relevant landscape and visual considerations particularly relevant. Large-scale forms of renewable energy are, as a whole, unlikely to be compatible with the statutory purpose of conserving and enhancing natural beauty.

For renewable energy proposals within the National Landscape classed as ‘major development’ (as per Paragraph 183 of the National Planning Policy Framework and Paragraph 6.3.10 of Planning Policy Wales), consideration should be given to whether exceptional circumstances apply that would justify permission being granted for such schemes, particularly in the context of the climate emergency. This would need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Position Statement on Dark Skies and Artificial Light Pollution

This draft Position Statement provides more technical content designed to be of practical use to property owners, as well as those who work and operate within the National Landscape, and decision makers. Recommendations are provided in terms of basic key principles which can be adopted by all to reduce unnecessary artificial light pollution. It also seeks to provide clarity on when lighting requires planning permission. Additionally, the guidance refers to ambient lighting environment zones (E-zones) in and around the National Landscape in which different levels of obtrusive light might be allowed (this is with reference to the Institution of Lighting Professionals guidance on the reduction of obtrusive light (GN01 ILP: 2021) and where a professional lighting designer may be required. It is also intended to be used to help secure an appropriate planning policy on this issue in future iterations of new/reviewed Local Plans by local planning authorities within the Wye Valley National Landscape. It will also inform and augment future Wye Valley AONB Management Plans.

This position statement is aimed at three main users who are using, replacing or installing new lighting in and around the Wye Valley National Landscape, as well as those installing new glazing and windows:

- those seeking to install minor lights, whom need general advice on lighting and glazing;
- non-domestic schemes which may need planning permission and a more through design led by professional principles; and
- those with responsibility for setting the framework for development and for decision-making about individual planning applications.

Background

Position Statements seek to help to deliver the strategic objectives and policies contained within the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan 2021-2026. The Wye Valley AONB Management Plan is a statutory document and a material consideration in planning decision-making. However, it is the adopted development plan policies of the relevant local authority that planning decisions are required to be taken in accordance with, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Position Statements have been prepared by the Planning Officer at the Wye Valley National Landscape Team, drawing on the shared experience from the similar Position Statements prepared for the Malvern Hills National Landscape Partnership. Should any member or interested party have any direct questions or queries concerning the content of the draft Position Statements, please contact the National Landscape Planning Officer and/or the AONB Manager.

On 22 November 2023, the all Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty re-branded as National Landscapes. Consequently, the name Wye Valley National Landscape is commonly used throughout this document. The legal name for the designation remains Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), and this term is also used in appropriate places, for example, when referring to the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan, when directly quoting from older documents, and when referring to planning policy formally relating to the AONB designation.



Dyffryn Gwy
Tirwedd Cenedlaethol
Wye Valley
National Landscape

WYE VALLEY NATIONAL LANDSCAPE

POSITION STATEMENT: RENEWABLE ENERGY IN THE WYE VALLEY NATIONAL LANDSCAPE AND ITS SETTING

A quick note on terminology

On 22 November 2023, the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), was re-branded as the Wye Valley National Landscape. National Landscapes are designated AONBs. Consequently, the name Wye Valley National Landscape is commonly used throughout this document. However, since 'AONB' remains the legal name for the designation, this term is also used in appropriate places, for example, when referring to the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan, which is a statutory plan, or when directly quoting from older documents. The name used for the partnership associated with the designation is the Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership.

1.0 CONTEXT

1.1 Climate Change is the biggest threat to humanity and one of the greatest threats to biodiversity¹. Projections show a change towards warmer, wetter winters and hotter, drier summers and increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, which will continue to amplify as climate change intensifies. Changes pose risks to biodiversity; soil health; natural carbon stores and sequestration; crops and livestock; the supply of food, goods and services; the economy; and human health. Collectively, we need to proactively mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

1.2 The Wye Valley National Landscape is a landscape whose distinctive character and natural beauty is so outstanding that it is in the nation's interest to safeguard it². The statutory purpose of AONB designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area³. Many defining features and 'Special Qualities'⁴ of the AONB designation are threatened by climate change. They are also potentially threatened by responses to

¹ The National Association of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (2019) The Colchester Declaration (<https://landscapesforlife.org.uk/projects/colchester-declaration>).

² Section 82 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000)

³ Defra (2019) Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty: technical support scheme (England) 2019 to 2020.

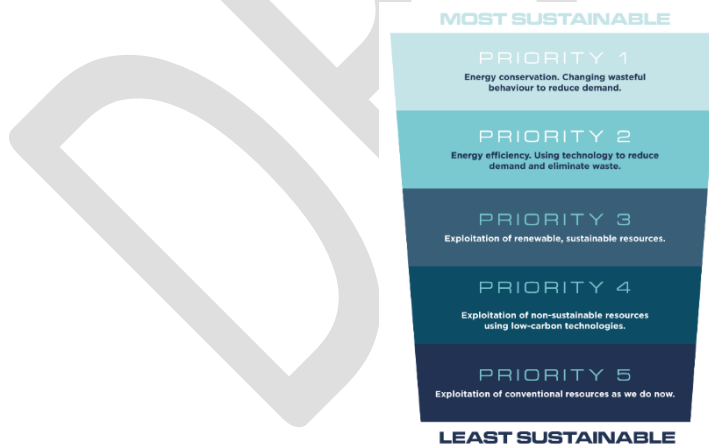
⁴ Page 44 of the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2021-2026. AONBs are designated by reason of its special qualities; those aspects of the area's natural beauty which make the area distinctive and are the key attributes on which the priorities for its conservation and enhancement are based.

climate change, for example, due to visual impacts of development proposals. Action is urgent but needs to be well thought out and carefully implemented.

1.3 Within this context, the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) committed to ensuring that by 2024, ‘*all AONB management plans include meaningful measures around climate change mitigation and adaptation, including clear, measurable targets to support Net Zero*’⁵. The current Wye Valley AONB Management Plan already advocates this approach through several Strategic Objectives, recognising a need to move towards a more energy efficient, low-carbon economy. The forthcoming review of the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan will introduce further expectations, policies, and guidance to address the challenges of climate change in the National Landscape and its setting whilst conserving and enhancing natural beauty.

1.4 A key component of climate change mitigation is to progress to a more sustainable energy system by applying the energy hierarchy (Figure 1). The first two priorities aim to reduce the demand for energy and will be addressed in the forthcoming Wye Valley AONB Management Plan review. However, we recognise that there is also a need to generate energy from renewable energy sources towards achieving ‘net-zero.’ This includes on-site provision of renewable energy in new development and, where appropriate, retrospectively. It is Priority 3, specifically renewable energy, that is the focus of this Position Statement.

Figure 1. Energy Hierarchy⁶



1.5 Renewable energy has an important role in mitigating the impacts of climate change and is key to the commitment of reducing reliance on fossil fuels and achieving decarbonisation. There are various technologies available producing electricity, heat, or

⁵ Refer to Footnote 1.

⁶ <https://www.glasgowsciencecentre.org/our-blog/the-energy-hierarchy>

both. However, without good design, their implementation in the Wye Valley National Landscape and its setting may harm the 'Special Qualities'⁷, for instance through scale or the introduction of extraneous elements within the landscape. A key consideration is to deliver aspirations in a way which is compatible with the statutory purpose of AONB designation, and the Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership is committed to exploring opportunities to do so.

1.6 The level of protection afforded to the National Landscape may mean that some of its renewable energy provision will need to be met outside of the National Landscape or even its setting⁸. However, the Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership recognises the need for it to contribute to renewable energy provision where it is able to as, in addition to powering and heating homes, buildings and businesses, renewable energy brings social and economic benefits through job creation in manufacturing, construction and maintenance industries.

1.7 To do this, we will need a combination of renewable energy types, at appropriate scales. A carefully considered multi-functional approach can deliver positive outcomes for natural beauty, climate adaptation and mitigation, nature recovery and related issues, such as food production, in mutually supportive ways.

1.8 This Position Statement focusses on renewable energy as a means of mitigating impacts of climate change. Measures to adapt to climate change are also important although beyond the scope of this Position Statement. This is a 'live' document, which will be updated to reflect change in national policy and renewable energy technology.

2.0 PURPOSE OF THIS POSITION STATEMENT

2.1 Position Statements expand on relevant policies in the current Wye Valley AONB Management Plan, providing further context, guidance and recommendations concerning specific policies and associated issues. They do not create new policies. They intend to help local authorities, developers, and other relevant stakeholders:

- have regard and positively contribute to the purpose of AONB designation;
- ensure the purpose of AONB designation is not compromised by development and that the natural beauty of the Wye Valley National Landscape is conserved and enhanced;
- fulfil the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Planning Policy Wales (PPW), Planning Practice Guidance (or, where relevant,

⁷ Those aspects of the area's natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage, that make the area distinctive and are valuable, particularly at a national scale.

⁸ Refer to Wye Valley AONB Management Plan in respect of 'The setting of the AONB' (Section 4.5)

National Policy Statements), and Technical Advice Notes, with regards to the AONB designation and the factors that contribute to their natural beauty;

- take account of relevant case law;
- have regard to and be consistent with the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan and guidance published by the Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership;
- emulate best practice in the Wye Valley National Landscape and other protected landscapes; and
- develop a consistent and coordinated approach to relevant issues across the whole of the Wye Valley National Landscape and its setting⁹.

2.2 Relevant authorities¹⁰ are required by law, in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in an area of outstanding natural beauty, must seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty (England only), or have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty (Wales only)¹¹. In fulfilling this, it is important that relevant authorities have regard to guidance published by the Partnership, including position statements.

2.3 Position statements are supplementary to the statutory Wye Valley AONB Management Plan. However, we consider the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan and, by extension, Partnership guidance and position statements, should be a material consideration in plan-making and decision-making. It is important to note that planning law requires that planning applications are determined in line with the relevant local authority development plan unless there are material considerations that indicate otherwise.

2.4 In some instances, recommendations may go further than the policies of current LPA development plans. As new iterations of LPA development plans are developed, we hope the recommendations will be incorporated into those new iterations as we believe they can positively help those who value and care for this area ensure that future developments contribute to the local distinctiveness and sense of place.

⁹ Four local authority areas overlap with the Wye Valley National Landscape, with each with local authority having its own development plan.

¹⁰ In this context, 'relevant authority' includes any: Minister of the Crown; public body; statutory undertaker; person holding public office.

¹¹ Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) amended following the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (2023).

2.5 It must be acknowledged that, in a plan-led planning system, it is the policies of the relevant adopted local authority development plan that have the greatest weight. As such, within this planning system, the hierarchy is as follows¹²:

The adopted development plan comprises the Local Planning Authority Development Plan (England and Wales), and any ‘made’ Neighbourhood Development Plan (in England only, when adopted), and Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 (Wales only), in which decision-making is to be taken in accordance with, unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise.

Wye Valley AONB Management Plan, like the National Planning Policy Framework or Technical Advice Notes, are examples of material planning considerations, but do not form part of the adopted development plan. Wye Valley National Landscape Position Statements and guidance documents supplement the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan.

3.0 LEGISLATION, POLICY, AND GUIDANCE

3.1. Proposals for renewable energy development within the Wye Valley National Landscape and its setting should have regard to:

- the statutory purpose of AONB designation, which is to conserve and enhance the outstanding natural beauty of the area;
- national planning policy/guidance;
- the relevant local authority development plan, and other relevant local authority guidance and evidence.

3.2 Such proposals should have regard to, and be compatible with Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership publications, including Position Statements.

¹² In England, Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states: “If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.” The NPPF (2023) is itself a significant material consideration, although it is acknowledged regarding the presumption in favour of sustainable development under Paragraph 11, particularly in relation to plan-making and decision-making.

On Wednesday 13th September 2023, the DEFRA Secretary of State tabled a [Written Ministerial Statement](#) setting out a package of measures to support nature recovery in Protected Landscapes. The package includes a commitment to new legislation through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (2023), which will enhance National Park and AONB Management Plans by placing a stronger requirement on partners to contribute to their delivery.

In Wales, national planning guidance prepared by the Welsh Government, is taken into account as a material planning consideration. A series of quick guides prepared by the Senedd Cymru provides further guidance to plan-making and decision-making bodies: [The planning system – a series of quick guides \(senedd.wales\)](#)

4.0 PROTECTING THE SPECIAL QUALITIES OF THE WYE VALLEY NATIONAL LANDSCAPE – GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS AND ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS

4.1 Landscape Character

4.1.1 The Wye Valley AONB Management Plan identifies the 16 different landscape management zones (LMZs) of the National Landscape, including 'Features' and 'Special Qualities'. For each LMZ, the AONB Management Plan also summarises activity pressures, identifies 'local forces for change' and their potential positive and negative implications associated with such activities and pressures, setting out guidelines for avoiding or minimising adverse effects from them by way of Strategic Objectives. Certain forces for change may exist however are not yet included in the AONB Management Plan, such as the planting of energy crops.

4.1.2 Landscape assessments for renewable energy project proposals should refer to the relevant LMZ, and also to County-wide Historic Landscape Characterisation. They should demonstrate how the proposal responds to the existing landscape pattern and landform and how it seeks to conserve and enhance existing important landscape features such as vegetation and field boundaries. Key viewpoints of the development from within the National Landscape and its setting, to also include both looking out and into the National Landscape, should also be identified and assessed, to include photomontages.

4.1.3 Regard should also be given to the relevant local planning authority landscape character assessments and related evidence, including Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Studies. The Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership Position Statement on Landscape-Led Development is also particularly relevant for consideration.

4.1.4 Renewable energy projects should prioritise use of previously developed ('brownfield') land, where possible. Where greenfield sites are proposed, projects should benefit the local rural economy; be supported and/or owned by local communities; bring net benefits to wildlife; avoid/minimise loss of productive agricultural land; and avoid adverse impacts on landscape character and/or visual amenity, tranquillity, and cultural heritage.

4.2 Other factors that contribute to natural beauty

4.2.1 The extent to which a proposed renewable energy development might affect the landscape and scenic beauty of the Wye Valley National Landscape and its setting is obviously a key consideration and, in planning terms, these effects should be given great

weight¹³. There are several additional factors that contribute to the natural beauty of the AONB designation, including, but not limited to:

- Natural heritage (including biodiversity);
- Wildlife;
- Cultural heritage (including historic environment); and
- Relative tranquillity:

4.2.2 More information on the factors that contribute to natural beauty is provided in Natural England's 'Guidance for assessing landscapes for designation as National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty'¹⁴.

4.2.3 The following issues concerning visual effects & tranquillity should be considered:

- Siting – due to the 'Special Quality' identified in the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan of its 'Picturesque, extensive and dramatic views', much of the designated AONB, and its setting, could be considered unsuitable for all but household and micro-scale renewable energy installations, and – potentially – some smaller scale renewable energy projects. The conditions whereby there may be opportunity, and the specific considerations that should be assessed for each renewable energy source type, are discussed in later sections of this position statement.
- Agricultural Land – normally renewable energy projects should not be located on useable agricultural land, particularly the most productive Grade 1, 2 and 3a land. Nor should they be on typically low-grade hillside land where their impact would be greatest. The grade should be stated on any application.
- Screening – Screening (and softening) in the form of hedges or tree belts may be appropriate to help reduce visual impact, providing it is in keeping with local landscape character. It should be borne in mind that a hedge may well take ten years to grow to a height sufficient to provide effective concealment and tree cover longer. Also, climate change itself may have an impact on the long-term viability and health of vegetation cover/screening.
- Zone of Visual Impact – Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIAs) should be employed at the pre-application stage to describe local landform and key views and the likely impacts on neighbouring properties, local character of a settlement and

¹³ This 'great weight' is a factor in planning decisions when assessing the overall planning balance. In effect, it 'tilts the scales' towards a decision that would avoid harm to the landscape and scenic beauty of the affected designated AONB. The significance of applying this great weight partly depends on the significance of any adverse effects on the designated AONB. The overall planning balance will depend on the weight that should be given to other considerations.

¹⁴ Natural England (2011) Guidance for assessing landscapes for designation as National Park or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty - refer to Table 3 and Appendix 1.

public rights of way etc. Solar panels, frames/supports, and/or other infrastructure, should not detract from the local character of a settlement.

- Materials & additional infrastructure –
 - a) Measures to minimise glare and visual impact should be stipulated as a planning condition.
 - b) Bases should be easy to remove to permit restoration of the land.
 - c) Security fences, if required, should be of sympathetic design and screened, as necessary. Any necessary security measures should be of minimal landscape and visual impact. Significant security fencing which is inconsistent or incompatible with the local rural environment may help to render a development unacceptable. Consideration should be given for the minimal length and height of any necessary security fencing, natural features such as hedgerows should be used to assist in site security and/or screen security fencing, where this is locally appropriate. In some instances, specialist fencing may be necessary to prevent access by deer, whilst appropriate measures should be in place to facilitate continued access by larger mammals, such as badgers and foxes.
 - d) Where pole mounted CCTV facilities are proposed the location of these facilities should be carefully considered and designed to minimise visual/landscape impact. In exposed landscapes such structures should be avoided.
 - e) The use of security lighting should be minimised. Any lighting should utilise a passive infra-red (PIR) technology and should be designed and installed in a manner which minimises glare, light pollution and impacts on biodiversity, in particular bats. Planning applications should contain full details and specifications of all security and lighting installations to allow an accurate landscape/visual/ecological assessment of the proposal to be made. Lighting features should be of a sympathetic design and installed to minimise light pollution, and conserve dark skies.
 - f) Buildings associated with renewable energy projects, such as transformer stations and inverter cabinets, should be unobtrusively sited, sympathetically designed, and suitably shielded to minimise visual impact.
 - g) Access roads – new roads and tracks should be kept to an absolute minimum, sited, designed, and built to minimise impact on the landscape.
 - h) Grid connection – a key constraint to local renewable energy production is the connectivity of the location of a proposed renewable energy scheme with the National Grid. Significant upgrading may need to be undertaken to provide this connectivity, which may make a scheme unviable. The consideration of renewable energy schemes, including the assessment of their acceptability, should take account of any necessary associated infrastructure such as access

roads, cables (and whether these should be over or below ground) and ancillary buildings.

- i) Tranquillity – the impact of noise, both in construction and operation, should be carefully considered, especially given that this may be proportionately more disruptive in otherwise quiet rural areas.

4.3 Manufacturing & De-Commissioning

4.3.1 The manufacture and construction of some renewable energy developments, as well as any decommissioning/demolition phase, has its own energy and carbon cost that should be considered when assessing the need for the development, weighing up that cost alongside other impacts against the benefits the project may bring.

4.3.2 Decommissioning of energy sites at the end of their useful life (for solar, quoted as 35 to 40 years but likely to be much less as technology progresses) also poses issues which must be planned for.

4.3.3 As a result of the temporary nature of many of renewable energy technologies, the Partnership would expect local planning authorities to apply appropriate conditions to planning permissions requiring the removal of any buildings and any other structures at the end of the life of the proposed installation or when they become obsolete, whichever is the earlier. In accordance with both the NPPF and PPW, sites granted temporary planning permission should not be considered to constitute brownfield land.

4.3.4 In addition, local planning authorities should require proposals to demonstrate how solar panels and batteries will be recycled or how toxic waste will be disposed of, as part of relevant applications.

4.4 Restoring the site

4.4.1 Planning permission granted for some renewable energy projects, especially wind turbines and solar farm PV panels, is generally considered temporary and granted for a restricted time period, after which it can be renewed, as appropriate. Restricting the development lifetime is a mechanism for ensuring that outdated, inefficient, and redundant development is removed.

4.4.2 A site Restoration and Reinstatement Strategy in the form of a legal agreement should be sought to ensure restoration of any relevant land to agricultural (or other) usage once the consent or use has terminated and a condition imposed that all equipment

associated with the development is removed. The agreement should demonstrate how and when the site will be returned to a state that is in good landscape and ecological condition and in keeping with local landscape character.

4.4.3 Food security is relevant given the UK imports 40% of the food it consumes, and this is rising¹⁵. As global food prices rise, agricultural land, even of lower grades, should not be misused by change of use to inefficient renewable energy schemes and its restoration at the end of life of a scheme is important.

5. ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS

5.1 Cumulative Impacts

5.1.1 The cumulative landscape and visual impact of a proposed renewable energy scheme (and any associated infrastructure) is a key consideration. There are no hard and fast rules about how suitable areas for renewable energy should be identified, but in considering locations, local planning authorities will need to ensure they take into account, critically, the potential impacts on the local environment, including from cumulative impacts¹⁶.

5.1.2 Cumulative landscape impacts and cumulative visual impacts are best considered separately. Cumulative landscape impacts are the effects of a proposed development on the fabric, character, and quality of the landscape. Cumulative visual impacts concern the degree to which proposed renewable energy development will become a feature in particular views (or sequences of views) and the impact this has upon the people experiencing those views.

5.1.3 With regards to cumulative visual impacts, this is particularly important for large-scale wind and solar energy proposals, which can potentially be seen from many miles away. Infrastructure that is likely to result in cumulative effects includes: other wind developments; overhead powerlines; and telecommunications masts and other vertical structures.

5.1.4 The ability for a renewable energy project to access the grid will also limit suitable locations and this is likely to lead to the clustering of applications in certain areas, with associated cumulative impacts.

¹⁵ Food Matters: Towards a strategy for the 21st Century:
http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/strategy/work_areas/food_policy.aspx

¹⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/renewable-and-low-carbon-energy> and PPW Technical Advice Note 8: Renewable Energy

5.1.5 Proposals should set out suitable assessments of impacts on biodiversity, hydrology, archaeology, landscape etc. Transport assessments should also consider access and vehicle movements during all stages of construction and development.

5.1.6 Renewable energy development should also not create a “buffer zone” or ring around the Wye Valley National Landscape, and the potential impact of renewable energy projects close to the boundary should be a material planning consideration.

5.2 Major Development

5.2.1 Consideration should be given to whether a proposed renewable energy development constitutes ‘major development’ in the context of paragraph 183 of the NPPF¹⁷ or Paragraph 6.3.10 of PPW¹⁸, as applicable.

5.2.1.1 Footnote 64 of the NPPF states that *‘whether a proposal is major development is a matter for the decision maker, taking into account its nature, scale and setting, and whether it could have a significant adverse impact on the purposes for which the area has been designated’*. Paragraph 183 of the NPPF states that *‘permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest’*.

5.2.1.2 Paragraph 6.3.10 of PPW states that in designated AONBs, *‘special considerations apply to major development proposals which are more national¹⁹ than local in character. Major developments should not take place [in AONBs] except in exceptional circumstances. This may arise where, after rigorous examination, there is demonstrated to be an overriding public need, refusal would be severely detrimental to the local economy and there is no potential for locating the development elsewhere or meeting the need in some other way. Any construction and restoration must be carried out to high environmental standards’*.

5.2.2 When assessing ‘major development’ both the NPPF and PPW require three major development ‘tests’ to be applied, which are outlined below:

5.2.2.1 Major Development Test A – assessing the need for the development

The priority given to climate change, through the declaration of the climate, nature and ecological emergencies, would potentially make it easier to demonstrate ‘exceptional

¹⁷ Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (2023) National Planning Policy Framework - Paragraph 183 and footnote 64.

¹⁸ Welsh Government – Planning Policy Wales Edition 11 – February 2021

¹⁹ ‘National’ in this context means UK

need' for renewable energy proposals. Genuine community-led renewable energy schemes²⁰, which have robust evidence of need specific to the community, and which have appropriate funding and administrative mechanisms in place, are more likely to demonstrate 'exceptional need' than schemes that meet a more generic need. It should be noted however that exceptional need does not necessarily equate to *exceptional circumstances*²¹. For example, there may be other, more suitable ways of mitigating the impacts of climate change (or delivering renewable energy) or less harmful locations for the proposed development.

5.2.2.2 Major Development Test B – assessing the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area or meeting the need in some other way:

Case law has stated that '*no permission should be given for major development save to the extent the development met a need that could not be addressed elsewhere*'²². As such, all other things being equal, it could be argued that if there are areas outside the Wye Valley National Landscape (within a local authority area) that are identified as having equal or lesser landscape sensitivity to the type and scale of renewable energy development being proposed, then preference should be given to locating the development in those locations. Consideration should also be given to whether the proposed scheme is the most effective way of mitigating the impacts of climate change or is the most appropriate form of renewable energy. Consideration should be given to whether there are suitable nature-based alternatives for mitigating the impacts of climate change.

5.2.2.3 Major Development Test C – assessing any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated:

In relation to this test, case law has stated that '*no permission should be given for major development save to the extent the development ... met that need in a way that to the extent possible, moderated detrimental effect on the environment, landscape and recreational opportunities*'²³. As such, renewable energy proposals that constitute major development should be required to demonstrate that they have a) avoided; and b) minimised any potential detrimental effects (to the extent possible) in this regard. The higher the level of landscape sensitivity associated with the scale and type of renewable

²⁰ Genuine community-led schemes could include proposals included in neighbourhood plans or other projects, such as the Community Visioning schemes being piloted by CPRE and should have undergone appropriate community consultation processes.

²¹ This principle is recognised in relevant case law (R (Mevagissey Parish Council) v Cornwall Council [2013] EWHC 3684 (Admin), paragraph 52): '*Even if there were an exceptional need ... that would not necessarily equate to exceptional circumstances for a particular development, because there may be alternative sites that are more suitable because development there would result in less harm to the AONB landscape*'.

²² R (Advearse) v Dorset Council v Hallam Land Management Ltd [2020] EWHC 807. Direct quote from paragraph 35.

²³ R (Advearse) v Dorset Council v Hallam Land Management Ltd [2020] EWHC 807. Direct quote from paragraph 35.

energy development being proposed, the more this will weigh against permission being granted on the grounds of exceptional circumstances and public interest.

5.2.3 Future Wales – The National Plan 2040 sets out the national development plan context for energy and provides specific policies for heat network and renewable energy development. Planning applications for onshore generating projects in Wales which have an installed generation capacity of between 10MW and 50MW (there is no upper limit for onshore wind generating stations) are made directly to the Welsh Ministers under the Developments of National Significance (DNS) process and considered under policies in Future Wales.

5.3 Mitigation Measures

5.3.1 Mitigation measures should be considered as an integral part of the development; they should adequately offset any adverse landscape and visual effects and be appropriate to the local landscape character. The mitigation and reduction of some adverse impacts can be achieved through considered detail design.

5.3.2 Enhancements should be linked to mitigation measures where appropriate and should seek to maintain and improve the value and condition of the landscape and contribute to local distinctiveness. For example, the development of Solar PV facilities offers the potential to create sites of local or regional ecological interest, particularly where land is removed from intensive agricultural production.

5.3.3 Applicants will be expected to maximise the ecological potential offered by such circumstances by a) avoiding areas of ecological importance or sensitivity, b) encouraging and promoting a diverse range of habitats, such as wildflower meadows, within such facilities, and c) designing and adapting built structures, such as control buildings, to encourage and promote access by nesting, roosting or hibernating animals such as bats.

5.4 Development in the setting of the Wye Valley National Landscape

5.4.1 Renewable energy development in the setting of the Wye Valley National Landscape has the potential to adversely affect natural beauty, particularly with regards to impacts on views from and to the Wye Valley National Landscape.

5.4.2 Paragraph 182 of the NPPF and Paragraph 6.3.7 of PPW states that '*great weight*²⁴ should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in designated AONBs. Case law has clarified that this great weight should be applied to

²⁴ This 'great weight' is a factor in planning decisions when assessing the overall planning balance. In effect, it 'tilts the scales' towards a decision that would avoid harm to the landscape and scenic beauty of the affected designated AONB. The significance of applying this great weight partly depends on the significance of any adverse effects on the designated AONB. The overall planning balance will depend on the weight that should be given to other considerations.

development outside a designated AONB, as well as to development within it, where the proposed development may adversely affect the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB²⁵. Application of this particular case law example would consider effects on views from the National Landscape but not impacts on views looking towards - in our case - the Wye Valley National Landscape.

5.4.3 However, impacts on views towards the Wye Valley National Landscape are still an important material consideration, particularly in relation to views looking towards the Wye Valley, with these views being one of the 'special qualities' of the National Landscape. And in terms of the views from the Wye Valley National Landscape, the topography means that a larger area may need to be considered in terms of potential effects on views than in a designated National Landscape without such elevations. This is especially the case for visual receptors on the Wye Valley themselves. Other relevant considerations include the potential increase in traffic movements through the Wye Valley National Landscape (or along its boundary) that may result from a proposed development.

5.4.4 Paragraph 182 of the NPPF states that '*development within [the setting of AONBs] should be sensitively located and designed in order to minimise adverse impacts on the designated area*'. Paragraph 6.3.5 of PPW states that '*this duty [statutory landscape designation of AONB purposes] applies in relation to all activities....whether those activities lie within, or in the setting of, the designated areas*'. The Wye Valley AONB Management Plan provides further relevant information on this.

5.5 EIA

5.5.1 Where renewable energy proposals fall under Schedule 2 of the relevant Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations²⁶, consideration should be given to whether an EIA is required, particularly if the proposals is above the 'applicable thresholds and criteria' for Schedule 2 development²⁷.

5.5.2 EIAs are required where it is considered that the proposal is likely to have a significant effect on the environment. In such circumstances, it is highly likely that the proposal should also be considered major development, in the context of paragraph 183 and footnote 64 of the NPPF and Paragraph 6.3.10 of PPW.

5.5.3 Consultation with the Local Planning Authority and local community is encouraged at an early stage. The local community should be engaged, by the developer, at the pre-

²⁵ Stroud District Council v Secretary of State & Gladman Developments Ltd [2015] EWHC 488 (link). Paragraphs 20-22.

²⁶ Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 and The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017

²⁷ It is worth noting that the 'applicable thresholds and criteria' in Schedule 2 do not apply in designated AONBs. This is because designated AONBs are classed as 'sensitive areas,' in this regard. As such, Schedule 2 development within the Wye Valley National Landscape that is smaller than the applicable thresholds and criteria may also need to be screened to assess if an EIA is required.

design, conceptual stage, ideally utilising a local exhibition / presentation where community views can be sought and recorded.

5.5.4 As a starting point, the proposal should be assessed against the selection criteria in Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations. In general, an EIA is likely to be needed for Schedule 2 developments if the development is in a particularly environmentally sensitive or vulnerable location. In each case it will be necessary to judge whether the likely effects on the environment of that development will be significant in that particular location. In judging whether the effects of a development are likely to be significant it is necessary to have regard in particular to the visual impact of the development on landscape character and how this will be affected by the installation of the development, and also the possible cumulative effect with any existing or approved development. This should include situations where there is more than one application for development which should be considered together. Any views expressed by consultees should be considered. Advice should be sought from consultees where there is any doubt about the significance of a development's likely effects on a 'sensitive area' as defined in the EIA Regulations, including setting.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **The Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership recommends that any renewable energy projects in the Wye Valley National Landscape and its setting should prioritise 'brownfield' land where possible. Greenfield sites should be avoided except in exceptional circumstances;**
- **All renewable energy projects should seek to protect, conserve, and enhance the distinctive character and natural beauty of the National Landscape and its setting, including 'Special Qualities' by having regard to the considerations and guidance on mitigating impacts set out in this position statement and other Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership publications;**
- **The cumulative impacts of a renewable energy development proposal should be assessed in decision making;**
- **Renewable energy proposals should demonstrate they have considered the whole-life impacts of a scheme, including construction and decommissioning phases, and restoration of the site;**
- **Larger projects should benefit the local rural economy, be supported and/or owned by local communities where possible and avoid unjustified loss of productive agricultural land; and**
- **Renewable energy landscape and visual sensitivity assessments, including those commissioned by local authorities, should have regard to relevant guidance published by the Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership.**

6.0 TYPES OF RENEWABLE ENERGY

6.0.1 This position statement identifies six main types of renewable energy: heat pumps; biomass; hydropower; solar energy; wind energy; and battery storage. These are individually addressed in this section, including relevant considerations and key constraints specific to each type of renewable energy.

6.1 Heat Pumps

6.1.1 There are three main types of heat pump:

- Ground-source heat pumps (GSHP): takes low-level heat, which occurs naturally underground, and converts it to high-grade heat using an electrically driven or gas-powered heat pump. GSHP systems collect or deliver heat using ground collectors (typically coils or loops of pipe laid in trenches in the ground or vertical boreholes), in which a heat exchange fluid circulates in a closed loop and transfers heat via a heat exchanger to or from the heat pump. Once installed, there are no externally visible features.
- Air-source heat pumps (ASHP): takes low-level heat, which occurs naturally in the air, and convert it to high-grade heat by using an electrically driven or gas-powered pump. ASHP are typically mounted on an external wall (sometimes under a window). Increasingly, manufacturers are producing internally mounted air source heat pumps which only need louvers and/or roof vents for air supply/exhaust emissions (as in a conventional boiler). Once installed, the only externally visible structure may be the 'air conditioning unit' associated with the heat pump facility. Depending on the manufacturer, ASHP may be no louder than a central heating boiler.
- Water-source heat pumps (WSHP): extracts heat from a body of water and converts it into useful energy to heat the home.

6.1.2 Heat pumps are generally 'permitted development'²⁸, although rights are restrictive with regards to Article 4 directions, listed buildings, conservation areas, scheduled monuments, and World Heritage sites. In most cases, proposals are likely to be domestic in scale and, due to relatively limited landscape impact, will normally be acceptable and supported. Any reinstatement of land should be carefully, and sensitively undertaken and historic landscapes should, wherever possible, be avoided.

²⁸ Permitted development rights allow the improvement or extension of buildings or uses of such buildings without the need to apply for planning permission, where that would be out of proportion with the impact of the works carried out.

6.1.3 If buildings are needed to house equipment, this may require planning permission and should be carefully sited and designed, using appropriate materials.

6.1.4 Fitting of heat pumps is likely to be easier for new development than retrofitting. However, retrofitting may be appropriate where there is available space.

6.1.5 Heat pumps use electricity so still potentially contribute to greenhouse gas emissions (depending on the source of the electricity). However, they can offer carbon emission savings of around 30% when compared with conventional gas boilers.

6.1.6 The following checklist should be considered:

- During construction, the laying of pipes linked to GSHP should avoid disturbing ground which would be difficult to restore, such as unimproved grasslands, semi-natural habitats, tree roots and archaeological remains. A Local Planning Authority may require an archaeological survey before construction.
- Underground pipework associated with GSHP should be covered with soft or hard surfaces, which reflect local soils/geology and landscape character type.
- ASHP should be on the least visible elevations, if externally mounted.
- Measures should be taken to minimise impacts on neighbouring land uses.
- Quiet models should be selected, to minimise any impacts on tranquillity and other Special Qualities of the National Landscape.

6.1.7 RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **The Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership supports the use of heat pumps, in principle, provided relevant considerations have been adequately addressed, including:**
 - **size and siting;**
 - **noise impacts;**
 - **impacts on historic landscapes and archaeology; and**
 - **safeguarding existing trees/hedgerows and priority habitats, particularly during construction and operation.**
- **Underground pipework should be covered with soft or hard surfaces, which matches local soils and geology, where possible; and**
- **Reinstatement of land should be carefully and sensitively undertaken, to avoid compromising the 'Special Qualities' of the AONB designation.**

6.2 Biomass

6.2.1.1 Biomass refers to the use of a wide variety of organic material for the generation of heat, electricity, or motive power. The two primary types of biomass energy are:

- Woody biomass (wood and energy crops).
- Wet biomass (food waste and farm wastes).

6.2.1.2 For electricity production, the heat/steam is used to turn a turbine. There are currently three basic categories of biomass plants:

- Plants designed primarily to produce electricity. These are generally the largest schemes, in the range of 10–40 MW. Excess heat from the process is not utilised. These are major multimillion pound developments and are unlikely to be suitable within the Wye Valley National Landscape or its setting because of their scale and associated traffic movements. They are not considered further and such proposals would not be supported by the Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership.
- Combined Heat and Power (CHP) plants where the purpose is the generation of electricity, but excess heat is utilised. Size range is 5-30 MW thermal total energy output but smaller 'packaged' schemes of a few hundred KW are possible.
- Plants designed for production of heat. These cover a wide range of applications from domestic wood burning stoves and biomass boilers to boilers of a scale suitable for district heating, commercial and community buildings and industrial process heat. Sizes range from a few KW to above 5 MW of thermal energy.

6.2.2 Wood

6.2.2.1 Use of wood for fuel boilers is not only a renewable energy source but may have additional benefits. For example, it can provide economic incentive to bring woodlands within the Wye Valley National Landscape back into active management. Active management of deciduous woodlands through coppicing, pollarding, ride widening, and other forestry operations helps create warm, sunlit micro-habitats that benefit insects and wildflowers and provide better nesting habitat for many of our rarest woodland birds²⁹. Use of wood can have the benefit of recovering, from the waste stream, waste wood that would otherwise go to landfill. However, care is needed to ensure management of woodlands does not become unsustainable (e.g. because of over-exploitation), as demand increases.

6.2.2.2 New and on-going management of woodland will be required to facilitate nature recovery and mitigate impacts of climate change, particularly as woodland is identified as a 'Special Quality' within the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan.

6.2.3 Fuel crops

6.2.3.1 There may be potential for biofuel from other crops (i.e., energy crops) such as miscanthus and short rotation coppice (SRC). Developments are likely to have limited

²⁹ <https://www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk/woodlands/managing-our-woodlands>

impacts, if undertaken on a small scale. However, careful consideration will need to be given for larger-scale use of land for growing such crops as they are likely to have an adverse impact on landscape character (for example, as a monoculture that is alien to the locally-distinctive farmed landscape), biodiversity, water quality and soil quality (for example, as a result of winter harvesting) and visual amenity due to height and semi-permanent/permanent nature and, in the case of SRC, their long rotation cycle.

6.2.3.2 Large-scale fuel crop schemes would also likely conflict with other land use priorities, including food production, nature recovery and woodland planting.

6.2.3.3 Where fuel crops are being introduced, the potential for impacts on landscape character should be fully assessed, as should any potential impacts on sensitive sites, including permanent grassland, common land, SSSIs, other sites of nature conservation importance, and historic landscapes.

6.2.4 Wood and fuel crops – additional considerations

6.2.4.1 Whilst burning biomass does release CO₂ emissions, CO₂ is absorbed from the atmosphere during the growth of the source material and so the net lifecycle CO₂ emissions are zero. However, all biomass fuels also have an associated CO₂ intensity due to the additional energy required for collection, processing, and distribution, as well as for the construction and maintenance of a biomass facility. Transportation can be a large element of this for raw fuels, whilst heavily processed fuels such as wood pellets will require additional energy input during the process stages.

6.2.4.2 For proposals involving energy production from biomass, consideration should be given to whether such proposals require an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), particularly where the development area exceeds 0.5ha³⁰. Consideration should also be given to whether a scheme constitutes ‘major development’³¹.

6.2.4.3 Biomass boilers are also a potential source of air pollution, particularly with regards to particulates. Appropriate measures would need to be put in place to protect air quality. Firewood is now required to have a moisture content of 20% or less, which should help to address this issue, but industry should be encouraged to improve the efficiency of stoves and boilers to reduce harmful emissions. Use of domestic woodburning stoves should not be encouraged, due to potential impacts on air quality.

6.2.4.4 Transport of wood or crops to any energy production plant will increase vehicle movements unless the plant is adjacent to the source of fuel. To avoid unnecessary

³⁰ Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 and Schedule 2 of The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017 - both Development type 3(a).

³¹ In the context of paragraph 183 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023) and Paragraph 6.3.10 of Planning Policy Wales (2021).

infrastructure, plants should be as close to the settlements or facilities they serve, so an appropriate locational balance must be struck. For this reason, and to avoid greater visual and other effects likely to be caused by large-scale plants, small-scale plants would be preferable. Suitable schemes could include heating schemes for country estates and small-scale community heating schemes.

6.2.4.5 Priority should be given to using existing buildings, to house biomass facilities and to dry or process wood and other biomass. Where new buildings are required, siting, scale, design, colour, and materials used should be carefully considered and be compatible with the AONB designation and its special qualities³².

6.2.4.6 Biomass provides a relatively small amount of energy per hectare of land used. For example, solar energy can provide over 40 times as much energy per hectare as biomass³³. A very large area of land would be needed for energy crops to deliver significant levels of renewable energy in the Wye Valley National Landscape. This is likely to adversely affect landscape character and scenic beauty, including tranquillity (due to related traffic movements), and may compromise food production, biodiversity, and nature recovery.

6.2.4.7 RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **Wood:** In principle, the Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership would be supportive of small-scale wood fuel schemes which use locally sourced wood from sustainably managed woodlands within the Wye Valley National Landscape, provided relevant considerations have been clearly addressed.
- **Fuel crops:** In principle, the Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership would be supportive of small-scale fuel crop schemes, provided that relevant considerations have been clearly addressed.
- **Biomass:** Priority should be given to active management and utilisation of woodland (for supplying timber for wood fuel) in the Wye Valley National Landscape over schemes that rely on the planting of energy crops, especially short rotation coppice.

6.2.5 Wet biomass – anaerobic digesters

6.2.5.1 Anaerobic digestion (AD) is a process in which bacteria break down organic material in the absence of oxygen to produce a methane-rich biogas, which can be combusted to generate electricity and heat. Anaerobic digesters utilise farm and food wastes. They make a significant contribution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions,

³² Having regard to position statements and other guidance produced by the Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership.

³³ <https://www.biofuelwatch.org.uk/2018/biomass-and-land-use/>

reducing the quantities of methane released into the atmosphere, and providing a low carbon energy source that substitutes for energy generated from fossil fuels.

6.2.5.2 An AD plant typically consists of a digester tank, buildings to house ancillary equipment, a biogas storage tank, and a flare stack (3–10 metres in height). The digester tank is usually cylindrical or egg-shaped, its size being determined by the projected volume and nature of the waste. It can be part buried in the ground. There are two scales of anaerobic digestion plant:

- Small scale plants dealing with the waste from a single farm (generating in the region of 10kW) with the biogas potentially used to heat the farmhouse and other farm buildings in the winter when farm wastes are available.
- A medium-sized centralised facility dealing with wastes from several farms supplemented by other feedstocks and potentially producing up to 2MW.

6.2.5.3 The effects that may arise from any development in terms of visual intrusion, noise, odour, associated traffic movements and associated infrastructure, including overhead powerlines and pylons or poles, must be carefully considered. AD plants serving a single or small number of local farms may be appropriate within the Wye Valley National Landscape and its setting, provided the development can be incorporated within an existing farmstead; uses locally sourced, organic farm waste and/or sewage sludge material; is of an appropriate scale; is not visually intrusive; is constructed using appropriate materials; and is suitably landscaped to ensure the natural beauty of the area is conserved or enhanced, ensuring the 'Special Qualities' are not compromised.

6.2.5.4 Where crops are grown specifically as a feedstock for AD plants e.g. maize, this would raise similar issues to the growing of fuel crops in relation to competing land uses, water quality and impact on soils.

6.2.5.5 Associated large new buildings or structures on greenfield sites within the Wye Valley National Landscape or its setting are unlikely to be supported. This is because of the scale of the development and the vehicular movements required to supply feedstock, particularly in tranquil, rural areas where human influence is limited.

6.2.5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **In relation to wet biomass, in principle, the Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership would be supportive of small-scale anaerobic digestion (AD) plant schemes that use locally sourced, organic farm waste and/or sewage sludge, provided relevant considerations have been clearly addressed, including:**
 - **Integrating or locating adjacent to existing buildings or farmsteads; greenfield sites should be avoided;**

- **The digester tank should be part buried in the ground;**
- **Installations should not be in prominent locations or exposed skylines – the flare stack can be prominent;**
- **Installations should not affect the historical value of designated industrial features, historic monuments and archaeological sites and remains, or the ecological value of semi-natural habitats;**
- **Installations should not adversely affect the character and appearance of any Conservation Areas and listed buildings;**
- **Suitable materials (such as cladding of buildings), and colours should be used that integrate structures with their surroundings;**
- **Tree planting (using native species) that helps filter views of the AD plant should be considered; and**
- **Measures taken to minimise any visual, odour and noise impacts on the amenity of neighbouring land uses associated with the operation of the plant and deliveries of feedstocks.**
- **Large new buildings and structures associated with AD plants within the Wye Valley National Landscape or its setting, and/or schemes that import large quantities of material, are unlikely to be supported, because of the scale of the development and the vehicular movements required to supply feedstock, particularly in tranquil, rural areas where human influence is limited, and areas of semi-natural habitat and/or a strong historic character.**

6.3 Hydropower

6.3.1 Hydropower uses water flowing through a turbine to drive a generator that produces electricity. It is a highly site-specific technology, dependent on being near a water body that is both flowing and has a sufficient drop in level that can be exploited.

6.3.2 The potential for hydro-electric proposals are therefore very limited within the Wye Valley National Landscape and its setting due to geographical and environmental restrictions, although there may be scope for micro- or small-scale projects

6.3.3 Schemes involving installations for hydroelectric energy production, consideration should be given to whether they require an EIA, particularly where an installation is designed to produce more than 0.5 megawatts and/or where the area of the development would exceed 0.5 hectares³⁴. Consideration should be given to whether a scheme

³⁴ Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 and The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017. Development type 3(h) and 3(a).

constitutes 'major development'³⁵. Consents from the Environment Agency/Natural Resources Wales would also be required. Consideration is needed to be given to the impacts of infrastructure e.g. cabling required to connect the hydropower development to the grid.

6.3.4 RECOMMENDATION:

- **In relation to hydropower, the Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership would be supportive of micro or small-scale schemes, provided that relevant considerations have been adequately addressed. Proposals should:**
 - **Ensure equipment is placed either in existing buildings or new ones of an appropriate scale and design;**
 - **Use the existing head of water from existing impoundments without affecting the river flow;**
 - **Ensure noise levels do not adversely affect tranquillity;**
 - **Ensure river life is not detrimentally affected; and,**
 - **Operate without prejudicing progress towards achieving ecological objectives under the Water Framework Directive.**

6.4 Solar Energy

6.4.1 Solar Energy – general information

6.4.1.1 There are two types of solar energy:

- Photovoltaic panels or tiles that generate electricity from the sun's energy – these can be used at both domestic and commercial scale.
- Solar panels or 'collectors' (flat plate or evacuated tubes) that use the sun's radiation to heat water – these are used at a domestic and commercial scale.

6.4.1.2 In addition to the considerations for all renewable energy schemes provided in Section 4 above, a checklist of further issues to be considered for solar energy proposals is below:

- Consider views both from and to the Wye Valley National Landscape, views within the Wye Valley National Landscape including key and local viewpoints, and from popular tourist and scenic routes.
- Avoid locating solar PV where they could be directly overlooked at close quarters from important or sensitive viewpoints.

³⁵ In the context of Paragraph 183 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023) and Paragraph 6.3.10 of Planning Policy Wales (2021).

- Maintain uninterrupted views from the Wye Valley to the internal landscape to preserve its remote and strong cultural and historic sense of place.
- Site freestanding solar PV development on flat landforms or on lower slopes/within folds in gently undulating lowland landscapes.
- Ensure development does not span across different landscape character types/LMZs.
- Site developments in landscapes where screening is already provided by woodland, hedgebanks or high hedges. Where new screen planting is required, the Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership should ideally be consulted on the appropriate choice of species.
- Avoid adversely affecting areas of semi-natural habitat and designated historic and archaeological sites directly or indirectly.
- Protect the character and setting of buildings within Conservation Areas.
- Ensure that any PV developments do not detract from prominent landmarks.
- Protect the 'Special Qualities,' as detailed within the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan.
- Measures should be taken to minimise any visual and noise impacts on the amenity of neighbouring land uses.
- Avoid siting PV developments across multiple fields in areas with a small-scale irregular field pattern that is important to landscape character.
- Site PV development in areas that already contain signs of human activity and development.
- Consider how panels will be transported to site.
- Suitable materials and colour finishes should be used that integrate any new buildings with their surroundings. Utilise existing farm buildings to house inverters wherever possible.

6.4.1.3 Ground-mounted arrays can result in direct habitat loss, habitat changes and disturbance or displacement of species and this should be carefully considered.

6.4.2 Small-scale solar energy – size thresholds

6.4.2.1 When considering size thresholds, the following is relevant in this regard:

- EIA Regulations specify that proposals should be screened for an EIA if the development area exceeds 0.5 hectares³⁶.

³⁶ The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 and The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017 Schedule 2. Development type 3(a).

- Permitted development rights cover solar PV or solar thermal equipment on, or within the curtilage of, a dwellinghouse or block of flats.

6.4.2.2 However, it should be noted that these thresholds do not apply within National Landscapes (i.e. permitted development rights do not apply³⁷ and solar energy proposals that are smaller than 0.5ha could potentially be screened for an EIA³⁸).

6.4.2.3 In many landscape sensitivity assessments (LSAs) for renewable energy, 'small scale' solar energy development are schemes covering an area of five hectares or less. Nevertheless, it is appreciated that given the often long panoramic views from high vantage points and medium 'picturesque' views from the valley floor, the Wye Valley National Landscape, and its setting, is likely to have high landscape and visual sensitivity to all scales of solar energy development.

6.4.2.4 Based on the above, the following thresholds should be applied for small-scale solar energy development when considering this position statement:

- 0.5ha or less = micro-scale.
- 0.5 ha - 5ha = small/field scale.

6.4.2.5 The Wye Valley National Landscape Team are increasingly receiving queries relating to micro- and small-scale solar PV arrays. There are several types of arrays:

1. Small-/Field-scale solar arrays on greenfield land (undeveloped/agricultural land)
2. Small-/Field-scale solar arrays on brownfield land (developed industrial/commercial/contaminated land)
3. Micro- and small-scale solar installations over car parks, alongside air strips, and other suitable external areas
4. Micro- and small-scale solar installations on new or existing industrial/agricultural buildings and other large-scale roofs

6.4.2.6 Site justification is therefore vital, and identification of alternative sites should be considered. Ultimately proposed schemes will be judged on their own merits however array types 2, 3 and 4 above offer more significant opportunities for the mitigation of potential adverse impacts upon the Wye Valley National Landscape and its setting.

6.4.2.7 Proposals on, and within the curtilage of, residential properties not exceeding 0.5 hectares in size would need to be considered on a case-by-case basis where they are not permitted development. However, they are, in principle, likely to be acceptable in the

³⁷ The regulations relating to permitted development rights (PDR) for renewable energy specify that these PDR do not apply in 'Article 2(3)' land, which includes designated AONBs.

³⁸ The thresholds and criteria specified in Schedule 2 of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations do not apply in 'sensitive areas', including designated AONBs.

Wye Valley National Landscape and its setting, if compliant with relevant regulations and the considerations outlined in this position statement.

6.4.2.8 Proposals for small-scale solar energy schemes larger than 0.5ha but smaller than 5ha are less likely to be acceptable in the Wye Valley National Landscape and its setting due to the potential visual and/or landscape harm they present. Depending on the nature and siting of the scheme, they also may be considered major development, and if so, they should be assessed as such. Schemes that would constitute major development should only be permitted in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that the development would be in the public interest, in line with national planning policy. However, in specific circumstances and with adequate mitigation of potential adverse impacts on the Wye Valley National Landscape and its setting, a small-scale solar energy proposal may be acceptable.

6.4.2.9 As such, any small-scale solar energy schemes should always be considered on a case-by-case basis against relevant planning policies and with regard to relevant considerations in Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership publications and robust evidence provided as to how adverse impacts will be avoided or sufficiently mitigated.

6.4.3 Micro- and Small-scale solar - relevant considerations

6.4.3.1 This guidance primarily relates to such proposals being sensitively located³⁹ and sited⁴⁰. Location, siting, and design are also important considerations for schemes that relate to listed buildings, conservation areas and other heritage assets⁴¹.

6.4.3.2 PV panels mounted on buildings are often considered more suitable than those that are freestanding as they are likely to have a less adverse visual effect. PV panels can be used as a building material, integrated into the roof (or facades) of buildings e.g. using solar shingles, solar slates, solar glass laminates and other solar design solutions, and can be integrated with traditional tiles/slates⁴².

6.4.3.3 Solar collectors or evacuated tubes can be incorporated into the existing roof in the same way. Ideally, these require an angle of 30-40 degrees, facing south.

6.4.3.4 Consideration should be given to the effect of installations on the appearance of the building. It is a good idea to line panels up with existing windows and roof lights, ensuring the size of the panels are complementary to existing features on the building.

³⁹ 'Located,' in this context, refers to the placement of the proposed development with regard to the landscape context, including the Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership Position Statement on Landscape-led Development.

⁴⁰ 'Sited,' in this context, refers to the development's placement in relation to its immediate context.

⁴¹ 'Relate to,' in this context, means 'on,' 'in the curtilage of' and / or 'in the setting of.'

⁴² The UK Government has estimated that there are currently 250,000 hectares (approx. 625,000 acres) of south-facing commercial roofs in the UK (Part 2 of the Government's UK Solar Photo-Voltaic (PV) Strategy).

6.4.3.5 Consideration should be given to the colour and design of the panels and their frames and mounts/supporting structures. For example, panels with a dull, matt finish with anti-glare options and non-reflective frames/grids are less conspicuous as are panels with dark surfaces which are likely to be acceptable on buildings with darker slate roofs or on new buildings in areas where black slate roofs are characteristic, to integrate into the landscape.

6.4.3.6 Rooftop solar panels can blend well with contemporary, industrial, business park and agricultural buildings. Use of panels on such buildings, including by retrofitting should be supported, where considerations such as those listed above are followed.

6.4.3.7 Small-scale freestanding solar arrays that are well screened in enclosed gardens or closely linked to existing buildings with no or minimal visual impact may be acceptable. There may be circumstances where ground mounted solar arrays to serve groups of properties, community buildings, such as village halls, agricultural properties or other businesses are acceptable, where these are clearly well screened within existing building complexes or by other existing landscape features such as hedgerows, walls or trees, and which do not detract from any architectural or historic/archaeological interest, or compromise protected species.

6.4.3.8 Arrays need to be positioned such that any associated screening does not shade the panels. Where new screening is proposed, care needs to be taken to ensure screening does not adversely affect visual amenity and/or landscape character or heritage assets. Consideration will also need to be given to the potential impact of paraphernalia associated with the installation and operation of the solar panels.

6.4.3.9 Retrofitted roof-mounted solar units on buildings can nevertheless have a 'modernising' effect on their character and appearance, particularly when located on the principal elevation of a property. It is beneficial for panels to:

- Match roof materials;
- Lie/Be 'flush' with the roof and mounted at the same angle, minimising contrast;
- Mounted on an elevation where they are less visible, in the case of retrofitted panels, or incorporated as a garden feature, especially when associated with, for instance, older buildings; and
- Be at a suitable angle to maximize the capture of the sun's energy.

6.4.3.10 Roof-top panels on buildings have the added benefit of providing generation at the point of use, reducing transmission and distribution losses, and associated infrastructure impacts. Well-designed solar technology should be added as a mandatory part of building regulations for new build houses and all business/industrial development.

Local planning authorities should support rooftop PV panels generation through planning conditions to mandate it on new development and refurbishments.

6.4.3.11 RECOMMENDATIONS:

- In principle, the Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership would be supportive of domestic and micro-scale (i.e. less than 0.5ha) solar energy schemes provided relevant considerations have been clearly addressed. They will still need to be considered on a case-by-case basis;
- Small-scale solar energy schemes (i.e. between 0.5ha and 5ha) within the Wye Valley National Landscape and its setting, have greater potential to adversely affect the Special Qualities of the AONB designation and such proposals must be carefully considered on a case-by-case basis. Proposals will require robust evidence that relevant considerations have been clearly addressed. This includes having regard to visual effects, including the long panoramic views from high vantage points and medium 'picturesque' views from the valley floor, considering key vantage points within the Wye Valley National Landscape, and consideration of effects upon landscape character. Where such schemes are considered 'major development' proposals, applicants should be required to demonstrate that exceptional circumstances apply and the scheme would be in the public interest, having regard to Paragraph 183 of the NPPF (2023) or Paragraph 6.3.10 of PPW (2021), as applicable;
- Building-mounted or roof-top panels on new and existing buildings should be at the top of the solar energy 'hierarchy' and would be considered more favourably over freestanding solar development proposals;
- Local planning authorities should support rooftop PV generation through planning conditions on new development and refurbishment/retrofitting; and
- Solar technology should be introduced as a mandatory part of building regulations for new build development in local plan policies.

6.4.4 Large-scale solar energy

6.4.4.1 For the purposes of this position statement, we consider 'large-scale' as over five hectares (5ha) although the Partnership acknowledges that, in the context of landscape sensitivity assessments, for example, a wider range of size thresholds may be used. Main features of large-scale solar PV installations include:

- Panels being dark in colour due to their non-reflective coating, maximising absorption of light. Panels may appear paler depending on light conditions and type of panel. Panel surrounds and electric cable coverings may reflect light.
- Panels are visible from behind or the side, influencing how they are perceived.

- Panels are encased in an aluminium frame, supported by aluminium or steel stands mounted and secured either on pre-moulded concrete block ‘anchors,’ or foundations. Some developments contain panels that can be manually rotated and/or tilted to enable the arrays to track the sun. Technology does exist to allow for automatic tracking.
- Panels are held at a fixed angle between 20-40 degrees from the horizontal, facing south to maximise absorption of energy from the sun
- Arrays are sited in rows with intervening gaps between them for access, and to ensure the individual panels are not in the shade of panels. The actual arrangement of the arrays varies scheme to scheme.
- The height of the racks of solar panels varies depending on manufacturer and installer but tend to be between 2-4 metres off the ground.

6.4.4.2 Commercial-scale solar energy schemes usually require an area of at least five hectares to be viable⁴³. Community-led schemes may also require a substantial land area.

6.4.4.3 An important consideration is landscape sensitivity. This is a measure of the resilience of a landscape to withstand specified change arising from development types, without undue effects on the landscape and visual baseline. It has benefit by being evidence based and adding rigour to assessing development proposals.

6.4.4.4 The local planning authorities that overlap the Wye Valley National Landscape should undertake a landscape sensitivity assessment (LSAs) for wind and solar energy, as part of their evidence base for development plans (i.e. Local Plans).

6.4.4.5 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIAs) will help to identify the significance of landscape and visual impacts on a case-by-case basis. Cumulative effects also need to be considered. In terms of landscape value, the Wye Valley National Landscape should be attributed the highest category possible in such assessments. Agricultural land that is designated, for example for the protection of wildlife, should be avoided. LVIAs should contain a clear description of the site's agricultural classification and all other relevant designations.

6.4.4.6 The Wye Valley National Landscape has the Special Quality of ‘Picturesque, extensive and dramatic views’ throughout the National Landscape. The Partnership is unlikely to support, in principle, solar energy schemes within the Wye Valley National Landscape and its setting over 5ha, as it is unlikely that sufficient mitigation would be possible to avoid adverse effects to the landscape and visual baseline. Supporting such a scheme would not be consistent with the statutory purpose of AONB designation.

⁴³ Anecdotal evidence provided by consultants involved in commercial-scale solar energy proposals.

6.4.4.7 Schemes that would constitute major development⁴⁴ should only be permitted in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that the development would be in the public interest, in line with national planning policy.

6.4.4.8 Further guidance and recommendations on landscape sensitivity assessments and how they might be applied to identify 'suitable areas' for renewable energy in local planning authority development plans is provided in Section 6.6. Further guidance on the issue of major development is provided in Section 4.

6.4.4.9 Many considerations outlined in relation to small-scale solar energy schemes are applicable to large-scale schemes, including EIA thresholds. In addition to the impact of the solar panels themselves, consideration should be given to the impacts of any additional infrastructure that is required for the scheme, including road access, on-site tracks, hard standings, construction compounds, electrical cabling, security fencing, lighting substations, battery storage and / or control buildings, inverters, control rooms, transformers and underground power cables, and CCTV. Consideration should be given to potential conflicts with other land uses, such as food production (particularly on best and most versatile land), nature recovery and woodland creation.

6.4.4.10 Another consideration is the proximity of the road network, PROWs, and residential areas. The provision of any reflective material used on the panels should not interfere with the line of sight of road users (for public safety reasons). In addition, potential for glare or reflection of light from the panels that may impact upon signalling should be explored and eliminated. Similarly, the impact of the siting of solar panels, particularly in terms of their reflectivity, should be considered in relation to views from the Wye Valley and the impacts that may have on such users, as well as views from PROWs and from residential areas.

6.4.4.11 Large-scale solar PV installations occupy substantial areas of ground which may be visible, especially where sites are viewed from adjacent higher ground. Key landscape effects of large-scale solar PV developments are that they may:

- Be highly visible in open landscapes, when looking out from high ground, and on the upper slopes of hillsides, especially where covering significant areas;
- Lead to a perceived increase in human influence on the landscape;
- Result in land use change and the appearance of a field, affecting land cover patterns;
- Introduce a regular edge (to the panels) that can be particularly conspicuous in more irregular landscapes (especially where the panels do not follow contours);

⁴⁴ In the context of Paragraph 183 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023) or Paragraph 6.3.10 of Planning Policy Wales (2021).

- ‘Overtop’ hedgerows where panel heights rise to 3-4m, potentially reducing the visual prominence of field boundaries, a particular issue where several adjacent small fields are developed;
- Change the character of enclosure with security fencing and screen planting (including hedges allowed to grow out) around solar PV developments;
- Damage landscape features during construction;
- Result in a significant change in the character of wild or natural landscapes which are valued for their high nature conservation value and qualities of remoteness;
- Introduce ancillary buildings that can be uncharacteristic in the landscape; and
- Result in glint and glare from the panels.

6.4.4.12 Vegetation will grow under some large-scale solar development, and this will require management, particularly to avoid sites becoming overgrown with noxious weeds and assist with the eventual restoration of the site. There are various techniques for managing the vegetation; these include mowing, strimming, spraying, or mulching. Spraying should be avoided wherever possible and mulching large areas is likely to present technical challenges and may add to the landscape/visual impact of a development proposal. Few of these management techniques are regarded as sustainable, particularly on sites up to 15ha, and there is a desire, both in terms of food production and the rural scene, to continue an agricultural use on the site. Grazing is therefore encouraged wherever practicable. Cattle, horses, pigs, and goats are likely to be too ‘physical’ with solar arrays, but sheep, chickens or geese may be acceptable.

6.4.4.13 The Feed in Tariff for solar PV applies for a period of 25 years therefore developments should normally be regarded as temporary, hence the need for ‘reversibility’, and the ability for all structures to be removed and the land returned to its original use. A restoration strategy should demonstrate how the site will be returned to a state that is in keeping with local character and in good condition. In order to facilitate grazing within the solar farm it is advised that solar panels are positioned at least 700mm above ground level and all cabling etc is suitably protected.

6.4.4.14 RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **In relation to large-scale solar energy, the Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership would not be supportive of solar energy schemes within the Wye Valley National Landscape or its setting larger than five hectares (5ha);**
- **Applicants for large-scale solar energy schemes above 5ha should be required to robustly demonstrate that the scheme can be clearly accommodated without adversely affecting or compromising the natural beauty of the Wye Valley National Landscape and/or its setting. In addition to the impact of the panels themselves, consideration should also be given to**

the impacts of any additional infrastructure that is required for the scheme, particularly during construction, operation, maintenance, and decommissioning;

- Poorer grades of agricultural land that are designated, for example for the protection of wildlife, should be avoided; and**
- For ‘major development’ proposals, applicants should be required to demonstrate that exceptional circumstances apply, and the scheme would be in the public interest, having regard to paragraph 183 of the NPPF (2023) or paragraph 6.3.10 of PPW (2021).**

6.5 Wind Energy

6.5.1.1 Wind turbines use the wind’s lift forces to rotate aerodynamic blades that turn a rotor creating a mechanical force that generates electricity. The amount of energy derived from a turbine depends on wind speed and the swept area of the blade.

6.5.1.2 Wind turbines can be deployed singly, small clusters, (2–5 turbines) or larger groups as wind farms.

6.5.1.3 Wind turbines consist of the tower; a hub; blades; a nacelle (which contains the generator and gear boxes); and a transformer that can be housed either inside the nacelle or at the base of the tower.

6.5.1.4 Wind energy developments are unique in that they introduce a source of movement into the landscape. In current designs, the turbine blades turn around a horizontal axis but can turn around a vertical axis. Two-bladed turbines are available.

6.5.2 Small-scale wind energy – size thresholds

6.5.2.1 The following height thresholds provide a useful starting point:

- EIA Regulations specify that proposals should be screened for an EIA if the hub height of any turbine (or height of any other structure that forms part of the scheme) exceeds 15 metres and/or the development area exceeds 0.5 hectares⁴⁵.
- Permitted development rights cover several restrictions including ⁴⁶:
 - Wind turbines on (i.e., attached to) detached houses, which do not exceed 15 metres in height (or protrude more than 3m above the highest part of the roof, excluding the chimney); and

⁴⁵ The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 and The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017. Schedule 2. Development type 3(i) and / or 3(a). The EIA threshold also relates to wind energy development of any height (including smaller than 15m hub height) where there are more than two turbines.

⁴⁶ The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 - Part 14 and The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (Wales) Order 2012 – Part 40.

- Stand-alone wind turbines within the curtilage of houses or blocks of flats that do not exceed 11.1 metres.

6.5.2.2 In England, such thresholds do not apply within National Landscapes (i.e., these permitted development rights do not apply in AONBs⁴⁷ and turbines in AONBs that are smaller than 15 metres in height could potentially be screened for an EIA⁴⁸).

6.5.2.3 In Wales, permitted development rights do not allow for a stand-alone wind turbine would be installed on land which is within an AONB.

6.5.2.4 Nevertheless, having regard to the 'Special Quality' of 'picturesque, extensive & dramatic views' across the National Landscape, effectively means that only stand-alone wind turbines within the curtilage of houses or blocks of flats may be acceptable in the Wye Valley National Landscape and its setting. However, they would need to also, to comply with the relevant regulations and accord with guidance, primarily relating to proposals being sensitively located⁴⁹ and sited⁵⁰.

6.5.2.3 It is noted that the EIA threshold of 15 metres relates to the hub-height of the turbine. The blade tip height can be several metres higher. It is also worth noting that wind turbines with a blade tip height smaller than 25 metres are often classed as 'small' in landscape sensitivity assessments.

6.5.2.4 Based on the above, and for the purposes of this Position Statement, small-scale is viewed as wind turbines that are 25 metres or less, in height, to the blade tip. Wind turbines of this scale are most likely to be used for individual properties or small groups of properties, rather than commercial schemes.

6.5.3 Small-scale wind energy – location

6.5.3.1 With regards to 'location,' consideration should be given to landscape sensitivity. This means having regard to the potential sensitivity of the landscape character type/area where the development is proposed. This is addressed in more detail in relation to AONB designation considerations in (Section 4 of this position statement and in the identification of 'suitable areas' in Section 6.6).

6.5.4 Small-scale wind energy – siting and design

6.5.4.1 The size of a wind turbine should relate to the scale of its surroundings. Turbines should not dominate existing buildings or landscape features but be in proportion.

⁴⁷ The regulations relating to permitted development rights (PDR) for renewable energy specify that these PDR do not apply in 'Article 2(3)' land, which includes designated AONBs.

⁴⁸ The thresholds and criteria specified in Schedule 2 of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations do not apply in 'sensitive areas', including designated AONBs.

⁴⁹ 'Located,' in this context, refers to the placement of the proposed wind development with regard to the landscape context.

⁵⁰ 'Sited,' in this context, refers to the development's placement in relation to its immediate context.

6.5.4.2 The relationship between a turbine and the slope of the landform is a key consideration of wind energy development, particularly regarding the degree of landscape and/or visual impact. Ideally, turbines should be located below the skyline and towards lower slopes. The top of a steeply inclined slope is also not appropriate because the steep incline creates wind turbulence, reducing operational efficiency.

6.5.4.3 Choosing appropriate colours for the turbines (and associated infrastructure) may help reduce visual impact e.g. darker colours may be appropriate when the turbine is likely to be viewed against woodland or against a backdrop that is below the skyline.

6.5.4.4 Consideration should also be given to:

- Impacts on visual receptors: Particularly in relation to impacts on views from publicly accessible locations. Visual receptors on the Wye Valley, on named / promoted walking, cycling or horse-riding routes and at important viewpoints (for example, those marked on OS maps, or identified in NDPs (England only), are particularly sensitive in this regard. Where there are several potential locations for the wind turbine(s), priority should be given to the least prominent location.
- Ecology: Small-scale turbines are unlikely to impact bird species and habitats. During construction, care should be taken to avoid removal or fragmentation of existing vegetation. Consideration should be given to potential impact on bats.
- Impacts on historic environment and cultural heritage features/designations and their settings: Particularly conservation areas, listed buildings, scheduled monuments and (Un-)registered historic parks and gardens.
- Noise and shadow flicker: Wind turbines generate two types of noise – mechanical noise, created by its gearbox, and aerodynamic noise, produced by its moving blades. Shadow flicker occurs when the sun passes behind a turbine's rotating blades and casts a shadow that appears to rapidly flicker on and off. Proximity to neighbouring properties is particularly important in this regard.
- Cumulative impacts: This includes other wind developments, overhead powerlines, and telecommunications masts and other vertical structures.

6.5.4.5 RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **In relation to small-scale wind energy, only stand-alone wind turbines within the curtilage of houses or blocks of flats are, in principle, likely to be acceptable in the Wye Valley National Landscape and its setting, provided that relevant material considerations have been clearly addressed; and**
- **Each proposal should be assessed on a case-by-case basis and not give rise to adverse effects upon the natural beauty of the Wye Valley National Landscape and its setting.**

6.5.5 Large-scale wind energy

6.5.5.1 'Large-scale' means turbines larger than 25 metres in height, to the tip of the turbine (taking account of the definition of 'small scale', provided above). In the context of landscape sensitivity assessments, a wider range of size thresholds is likely.

6.5.5.2 As outlined in relation to small-scale wind energy above, the issue of visual sensitivity is also an important consideration.

6.5.5.3 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIAs) will help to identify the significance of landscape and visual effects on a case-by-case basis.

6.5.5.4 The Wye Valley National Landscape has the Special Quality of 'picturesque, extensive & dramatic views', along with the 'overall sense of tranquility, sense of remoteness and naturalness/wildness'. As a result, the Partnership is unlikely to support, in principle, large scale wind energy schemes within the Wye Valley National Landscape, and/or its setting, as it is unlikely that sufficient mitigation would be possible to avoid adverse change to the landscape and visual baseline, and hence supporting such a scheme would not be consistent with the statutory purpose of AONB designation.

6.5.5.5 Wind energy schemes that would constitute 'major development' can only be permitted in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that the development would be in the public interest, in line with national planning policy.

6.5.5.6 Further guidance on landscape sensitivity assessments and how they might be applied to identify 'suitable areas' for renewable energy in local planning authority development plans is provided in Section 6.6. Further guidance on the issue of major development is provided in Section 4 of this position statement.

6.5.5.7 Many of the considerations outlined in relation to small-scale wind energy schemes are also applicable to large-scale schemes, including EIA thresholds. In addition to the impact of the wind turbines themselves, consideration should be given to the impacts of any additional infrastructure that is required for the scheme, such as road access, on-site tracks, turbine foundations, hard standings, anemometer masts, construction compounds, electrical cabling, battery storage, sub-stations, and control buildings. Other relevant considerations are addressed in Section 4.

6.5.5.8 Consideration should be given for the effect of wind development upon landscape designations, geological and nature conservation designations, and historic assets near the development, and the wider landscape context.

6.5.5.9 RECOMMENDATIONS:

- In relation to large-scale wind energy, the Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership would not be supportive of large-scale wind energy schemes within the Wye Valley National Landscape and/or its setting;
- Applicants for large-scale wind energy schemes should be required to robustly demonstrate that the scheme could be accommodated without adversely affecting the landscape and/or scenic beauty of the Wye Valley National Landscape and/or its setting; and
- For major development proposals, applicants should be required to demonstrate that exceptional circumstances apply and that the scheme would be in the public interest, as per Paragraph 183 of the NPPF (2023) or Paragraph 6.3.10 of PPW (2021).

6.6 Wind & Solar Energy – Identification of ‘Suitable Areas’ (applies to England only⁵¹)

6.6.1 Paragraph 160 of the NPPF states that to help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy and heat, plans should ‘*consider identifying suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources, and supporting infrastructure, where this would help secure their development*’. In practice, identification of ‘suitable areas’ for renewable energy development in development plans primarily focuses on both wind and solar energy.

6.6.2 There is a strong onus on identifying ‘suitable areas’ for wind energy in English LPA development plans, with the NPPF stating that ‘*a proposed wind energy development involving one or more turbines should not be considered acceptable unless it is in an area identified as being suitable for wind energy development in the development plan...*’⁵². If LPAs do not identify suitable areas for wind energy in their development plans, then they are effectively ruling out wind energy development in their LPA areas.

6.6.3 The Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership recommends that the identification of ‘suitable areas’ should be based on a combination of:

- Landscape sensitivity assessments;
- Constraints mapping; and

⁵¹ As part of the evidence base for their replacement Local Development Plan, Monmouthshire County Council undertook a ‘Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Assessment’ (October 2020), which includes identification of ‘suitable areas’ - <https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/planning-policy/development-of-an-evidence-base/>. Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are identified as an Environmental/Landscape designation and are identified as a Constraint (areas excluded from ‘Less Constrained Areas’) and can be considered a ‘high risk’ area for wind and solar development. Identification of ‘Suitable Areas’ is therefore not considered further in this Position Statement in relation to Wales.

⁵² Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (2023) National Planning Policy Framework. Footnote 58.

- Technical consideration including wind speed and grid connectivity.

6.6.4 As stated in the PPG for Renewable and Low Carbon Energy, *‘there are no hard and fast rules about how suitable areas for renewable energy should be identified, but in considering locations, local planning authorities will need to ensure they take into account ‘... critically, the potential impacts on the local environment, including from cumulative impacts.’* The PPG goes on to state, in relation to the identification of suitable areas, that:

‘In considering impacts, assessments can use tools to identify where impacts are likely to be acceptable. For example, landscape character areas could form the basis for considering which technologies at which scale may be appropriate in different types of location.’

6.6.5 It is important to note that the PPG says ‘could’ rather than ‘should,’ in this regard. However, in the context of nationally designated protected landscapes, such as designated AONBs, and their settings, we consider that it is essential that the identification of suitable areas should be underpinned by a landscape sensitivity assessment. Guidance on this topic has been published by Natural England.

6.6.6 When ‘suitable areas’ are being identified, regard should be given to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership. Identification of ‘suitable areas’ should be underpinned by a landscape sensitivity assessment and by consideration of the constraints that relate to the natural beauty of AONB designation, including nature conservation and historic environment designations (in addition to infrastructure constraints and other technical considerations).

6.6.6.1 Wind and solar energy schemes should be steered towards areas of lower landscape sensitivity and away from key constraints. The UK Government’s PPG on Renewable and Low Carbon Energy states, in the context of identifying ‘suitable areas,’ that *‘there is a methodology⁵³ available from the Department of Energy and Climate Change’s website on assessing the capacity for renewable energy development⁵⁴.*

6.6.6.2 The methodology sets out a five-step process for addressing AONB designation:

- Step 1: Identify the purposes of the landscape area (reasons for designation)
- Step 2: Identify which technologies might affect these purposes/ integrity of the designation
- Step 3: Identify how each technology might affect the purposes/ integrity

⁵³ LUC and SQW Energy (2010) Renewable and Low-carbon Energy Capacity Methodology. Methodology for the English Regions. Commissioned by the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) and the Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG).

⁵⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/renewable-and-low-carbon-energy> . Paragraph 005.

- Step 4: Identify the type and level of renewable and low carbon infrastructure that could be accommodated without compromising the purposes/ integrity of the designations
- Step 5: Provide guidance on how to integrate renewable/ low carbon energy without compromising the purposes/integrity

6.6.6.3 The methodology identifies whether ‘constraints,’ such as infrastructure and nature conservation and heritage conservation designations, should be excluded from further consideration (i.e., not considered suitable for renewable energy development) and whether there should be a ‘buffer zone’ around these features. The consideration of relevant constraints and buffer zones is reflected in the evidence base of many, current development plan consultations.

6.6.7 Areas that are identified as having ‘high’ landscape sensitivity to the type and scale of renewable energy being proposed should be excluded from the suitable area mapping.

6.6.7.1 It is recognised that landscape and visual sensitivity is high across much of the Wye Valley National Landscape and its setting. Where landscape sensitivity is classed as ‘High,’ key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are highly vulnerable to change from the proposed scale of wind and solar energy development. Such development is highly likely to result in a significant (adverse) change in landscape character. In the National Landscape, such development is likely to have a significant adverse effect on the statutory purpose of AONB designation, which is to conserve and enhance natural beauty. The same is true for such development in the setting of the National Landscape in cases where the impact on views from and/or to the National Landscape is an important consideration in landscape sensitivity ranking⁵⁵.

6.6.7.2 In order for a landscape sensitivity assessment to have a meaningful role in the identification of suitable areas for wind and solar energy we recommend that areas within National Landscape that have ‘High’ sensitivity to particular scales of wind or solar energy development should not be included within ‘suitable area’ maps in local authority development plans. The same principle should also apply to ‘High’ sensitivity areas in the setting of a National Landscape, where the impact on views from and / or to the National Landscape is an important consideration in landscape sensitivity ranking.

⁵⁵ Case law (see also footnote 21) has clarified that the requirements of what is now paragraph 182 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) should apply to the impact of development outside a designated AONB on views from the designated AONB. In other words, great weight should be given to the impact of such development on these views. Although the same principle, clarified in the case law example, does not apply to the impact of such development on views towards a designated AONB, these views may still contribute to the ‘special qualities’ of the designated AONB. This is especially the case for the Wye Valley, the views towards which are considered one of the ‘special qualities’ of the Wye Valley National Landscape.

6.6.8 Consideration will also need to be given to types and scales of renewable energy that are identified as resulting in 'moderate-high' landscape sensitivity.

6.6.8.1 Development is likely to be 'major development' in the context of paragraph 183 of the NPPF, for which there is, in effect, presumption against granting planning permission, other than in exceptional circumstances.

6.6.8.2 Key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are also vulnerable to change from wind and solar energy development when the landscape sensitivity is classed as 'Moderate-High.' However, there may be some limited opportunity to accommodate wind turbines/ solar panels in such areas without significantly changing landscape character. Ideally, the landscape sensitivity assessment would specify the circumstances, or locations, where this might be the case. Given the fact that there may be opportunity (albeit limited) to accommodate such development without significantly changing landscape character, it might not be appropriate to automatically exclude such areas from 'suitable area' maps in local authority development plans.

6.6.8.3 However, where the scale of wind or solar energy development within a National Landscape (or its setting) is such that the landscape sensitivity would be 'Moderate-High,' such development is still likely to have a significant adverse impact on the natural beauty of the AONB designation. Such development is likely to constitute 'major development,' in the context of paragraph 183 and footnote 64 of the NPPF⁵⁶.

6.6.9 Renewable energy proposals within a 'suitable area' will need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis against relevant policy considerations, factoring in relevant AONB designation considerations.

6.6.10 Renewable energy LSAs that are commissioned by local authorities are normally based on a local authority's own Landscape Character Assessment. However, in fulfilling the statutory duty to have regard to the purpose of AONB designation, they should have regard to relevant documents published by the Partnership, including:

- Landscape Character Assessments;
- Wye Valley AONB Management Plan, with regards to policies and 'special qualities';
- Position Statements; and
- Other guidance relating to landscape character and landscape sensitivity e.g. Natural England's National Character Area profiles.

⁵⁶ Footnote 64 of the NPPF specifies that 'for the purposes of paragraphs 182 and 183 [of the NPPF], whether a proposal is 'major development' is a matter for the decision maker, taking into account its nature, scale and setting, and whether it could have a significant adverse impact on the purpose for which the area has been designated or defined'.

6.6.11 In the case of wind energy, they will also need to demonstrate that they have local community support. Where multiple renewable energy developments would be inter-visible, cumulative impacts are also be a key consideration.

6.6.12 RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **The Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership supports the identification of suitable areas for wind and solar energy in local planning authority development plans;**
- **Identification of ‘suitable areas’ should be underpinned by a landscape sensitivity assessment and by consideration of relevant constraints and technical considerations;**
- **Suitable area maps should exclude areas of high landscape sensitivity (and least within the National Landscape and its setting) and where there are key constraints;**
- **Renewable energy schemes should be targeted towards areas of relatively low landscape sensitivity (preferably low landscape sensitivity) within the LPA area. Renewable energy landscape sensitivity assessments, commissioned by local authorities, should have regard to relevant guidance published by the Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership; and**
- **In relation to large-scale solar energy and wind energy, within the highly sensitive context of the National Landscape and its setting, a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) should be carried out from pre-application stage and be submitted alongside a planning application. It should be produced to a high standard, follow best practice guidance (Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition, 2013), and demonstrate the proposal does not compromise the National Landscape and its primary designation purposes. The appraisal should identify the Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI) and assess the developments impact upon key viewpoints from within the National Landscape and its setting.**

6.7 Energy Storage

6.7.1 Renewable energy is intermittent in nature. It is important to provide energy storage systems that can be charged during periods of excess renewable energy generation and discharged at times of increased demand. Energy storage can be used to store electricity bought from the grid at cheaper times of the day, with dynamic energy tariffs that vary in price throughout the day.

6.7.2 Energy storage systems include:

- Pumped hydro involves pumping water uphill at times of low demand, storing it in a reservoir and, in high demand periods, releasing it through turbines to create electricity.
- Thermal energy storage involves storing excess energy to be used later for heating, cooling, or power generation; thermal energy can be stored in liquids, such as water, or solids, such as sand or rocks. Chemical reactions or changes in materials can also be used to store and release thermal energy.
- Mechanical energy storage involves harnessing motion or gravity to store electricity. For example, a flywheel is a rotating mechanical device that is used to store rotational energy that can be called up instantaneously.
- Batteries involve converting stored chemical energy into electrical energy. Advances in technology and falling prices mean grid-scale battery facilities that can store increasingly large amounts of energy are becoming common.

6.7.3 For small-scale forms of renewable energy that are advocated in this position statement, the most common form of energy storage is likely to be battery storage. In this context, battery storage solutions can be particularly attractive although battery size will depend on energy usage and the size of the technologies installed. Some, but not all, battery storage systems can be installed outdoors.

6.7.4 Where planning permission is required, relevant considerations include:

- Location and design of the structure that the batteries are to be stored in (including the potential use of existing buildings, such as barns);
- Fencing, substation, and other structures/infrastructure associated with the storage system;
- Access and maintenance arrangements;
- Noise impacts; and
- Sustainability and environmental impact of materials used (e.g. lithium).

6.7.5 RECOMMENDATION:

- **In relation to energy storage, in principle, the Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership would be supportive of energy storage schemes that provide effective storage of renewable energy that is generated in the Wye Valley National Landscape and its setting, providing relevant considerations have been adequately addressed.**

7.0 COMMUNITY-LED RENEWABLE ENERGY SCHEMES

7.1 Account should be taken of the economic and social needs of local communities. An important component of this is how energy and heating requirements of these communities are met.

7.2 Planning policy for England states that '*local planning authorities should support community-led initiatives for renewable and low carbon energy*'⁵⁷. In the case of wind energy, it also states that a proposed wind energy development involving one or more turbines should not be considered acceptable unless, inter alia, the proposal has the backing of the local community⁵⁸. Planning policy for Wales states that '*the Welsh Government supports renewable and low carbon energy projects which are developed by wholly Wales based organisations, including community groups, or provide proportionate benefit to the host community or Wales as a whole. In February 2020 the Welsh Government published a policy statement on local ownership of energy developments. This set out the Welsh Government's expectation for all new renewable energy projects in Wales to include at least an element of local ownership, to retain wealth and provide real benefit to communities. Locally owned generation provides a strong opportunity to retain economic value, contributing to prosperity*'⁵⁹.

7.3 As such, the extent to which a proposed renewable energy scheme: (i) explicitly helps to meet the energy needs of the individual local community; and/or (ii) is community-led, is an important consideration. Care should be taken that community-led schemes are genuine and not developer-driven. More appropriate schemes are those that may be part of Neighbourhood Plans (NDPs) or initiatives such as the Community Visioning projects being piloted by CPRE⁶⁰.

7.4 Proposals for community-led renewable energy should therefore be supported by evidence of the current carbon footprint/energy use of the community, and the impact that the renewable energy proposal will have on reducing this.

7.5 Renewable energy schemes can support rural diversification and educational opportunities, and community-owned renewable energy projects can provide incentives and ownership, as well as promoting self-sufficiency.

7.6 RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **In relation to community-led renewable energy schemes, in principle, the Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership would support community-led**

⁵⁷ Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (2023) National Planning Policy Framework - Paragraph 161.

⁵⁸ Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (2023) National Planning Policy Framework - Footnote 58. The revisions to the NPPF in 2023 changed the requirement for community 'backing' to community 'support'. 'Support' is, arguably, a (slightly) lower threshold than 'backing.' However, community backing, or support is likely to remain a requirement for wind energy proposals to be approved.

⁵⁹ Paragraph 5.9.24 of Planning Policy Wales (2021)

⁶⁰ <https://www.cpre.org.uk/what-we-care-about/climate-change-and-energy/renewable-energy/community-energy-visioning-showcasing-renewables-done-well>

schemes more favourably, provided that considerations have been clearly addressed, than those which are not community-led.

- **Renewable energy schemes should demonstrate benefits to the local community.**

V1 – DRAFT produced for Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) meeting of March 2024 to endorse as a consultation draft – February 2024 (JB)

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WYE VALLEY NATIONAL LANDSCAPE

POSITION STATEMENT: DARK SKIES & ARTIFICIAL LIGHT POLLUTION

A quick note on terminology

On 22 November 2023, the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), was re-branded as the Wye Valley National Landscape. National Landscapes are designated AONBs. Consequently, the name Wye Valley National Landscape is commonly used throughout this document. However, since 'AONB' remains the legal designation, this term is also used in appropriate places, for example, when referring to the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan, which is a statutory plan, and when quoting directly from older documents. The name used for the organisation associated with the designation is the Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership. National Landscapes are designated AONBs, which are protected under the National Parks and Access to Countryside Act of 1949. This protection is further enhanced through the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000 (CRoW Act, 2000).

1.0 CONTEXT

1.1 The Wye Valley National Landscape is a landscape whose distinctive character and natural beauty are so outstanding that it is in the national interest to safeguard it¹. The statutory purpose of the designation of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is to protect the land and conserve and enhance its natural beauty². As a 'protected landscape', the Wye Valley National Landscape represents some of the finest countryside across the UK, with a distinctive landscape, scenic beauty, and being rich in biodiversity and cultural heritage.

1.2 But it is not just the daytime views which are an attraction. The Wye Valley National Landscape also has a significant proportion of dark skies, some of which are amongst the darkest across the UK. Dark skies add to natural beauty, tranquillity and a sense of remoteness of place. Looking up at starry skies or across moonlight landscapes throughout the National Landscape can be a memorable and magical experience. Dark

¹ Section 82 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000).

² Defra (2019) Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty: technical support scheme (England) 2019 to 2020. Planning Policy Wales Edition 11 (2021) - Section 6.3.7.

skies are important for landscape, heritage, wildlife, recreation and enjoyment, tourism, health and well-being.

1.3 Whilst the land has legal protection, the sky above does not in the same manner. The more of us whom experience the magic of dark night skies, the more value we place on it and want to protect. Ensuring the Wye Valley National Landscape remains a place where a sense of remoteness and tranquillity predominates is encouraged, particularly as this is one of the Special Qualities of the National Landscape.

1.4 Many of us rely on light to live our lives. However, wasting light wastes energy, money, and contributes to climate change. Unintended artificial light pollution is taking a silent toll. It is increasingly eradicating our access to the wonder of beautiful night skies. Excessive artificial light can also disrupt sleep and potentially lead to serious health issues. It also plays havoc with the feeding and breeding cycles of bats, birds, insects and nocturnal animals. Inappropriate lighting, bad design and incremental development increases light pollution, reducing our ability to appreciate and benefit from our dark skies. Lighting on rural roads, village streets, houses and other developments have the potential to increase light pollution. It also impacts on our experience of the landscape by altering the naturally changing light levels that occur at dusk and before dawn.

1.5 We all recognise there is a genuine need for lighting for the purposes of ensuring safety and security, but such requirements can be met within proactive light management approaches, that are both sensitive and effective, and other means to avoid, minimise and, in many cases, reduce unnecessary light pollution. Put simply, lighting needs to be in the right place, the right amount, and the right amount of time.

1.6 Unnecessary artificial light pollution is already affecting the quality of our dark skies. Co-ordinated proactive measures are needed to conserve the dark skies of the Wye Valley National Landscape, increasing awareness and following simple principles.

1.7 This position statement aims to achieve a consistent approach to conserving and enhancing dark skies using recognised and respected industry standards. This intends to be dovetailed alongside several national resources, in particular:

- Guidance Note 1 – The reduction of obtrusive light – The Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP)³
- Good Lighting Guide and Blinded by the Light (updated 2020) – The Commission for Dark Skies (CfDS)⁴

³ <https://theilp.org.uk/resources>

⁴ <https://britastro.org/dark-skies>

1.8 With regards to adopting good practice, this Position Statement is informed by approaches undertaken by several other 'Protected Landscapes'⁵.

1.9 This position statement provides background to the importance of dark skies to those who live and work in the National Landscape, and those who visit to enjoy its natural beauty. It provides recommendations and good practice to those involved in planning and development on proactive measures to protect, conserve and enhance dark skies. It is also intended to be used to help secure appropriate policies on this issue in future iterations of new/reviewed Local Plans by local planning authorities within the Wye Valley National Landscape, also informing future Wye Valley AONB Management Plans.

1.10 This position statement is aimed at three main users who are using, replacing or installing new lighting in and around the Wye Valley National Landscape, as well as those installing new glazing and windows:

- For those seeking to install minor lights, whom need general advice on lighting and glazing;
- Non-domestic schemes which may need planning permission and a more through design led by professional principles; and
- Those with responsibility for setting the framework for development and for decision-making about individual planning applications.

1.11 Achieving good lighting and glazing design is essential when protecting the rural setting of the landscape. Due to the contrast against a darker landscape setting, the impact of lighting at night will have a larger relative visual impact than daytime views. As such, development that may be many miles from the National Landscape boundary can have a significant visual impact on the landscape.

1.12 Recommendations:

- The Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership acknowledges there is a genuine need for lighting for the purposes of ensuring safety and security, but such needs can be met within proactive light management approaches, that are both sensitive and effective, and other means to avoid, minimise and, in many cases, reduce unnecessary artificial light pollution.
- The Partnership fully recognises the importance of enhancing dark skies across the Wye Valley National Landscape, and proactively encourages this recognition more widely, including for residents, workers and visitors to the area, and the authorities responsible for relevant aspects of its management.

⁵ This includes the Cotswolds National Landscape Position Statement on Dark Skies and Artificial Light, the North Wessex Downs National Landscape Dark Skies Project, the South Downs National Park – Dark Skies Technical Advice Note, Cranbourne Chase National Landscape Position Statement on Dark Skies (including Developers' Guide), Mendip Hills National Landscape Position Statement on Dark Skies & Light Pollution, and the Dedham Vale and Coast & Heaths National Landscapes Lighting Design Guide. General dark skies supporting information has also been informed by work undertaken by Howardian Hills, South Devon and Surrey Hills National Landscapes.

- The Partnership will proactively work with stakeholders across the Wye Valley National Landscape, and its setting, to adopt and promote common and appropriate standards, helping establish practical measures to reduce artificial light pollution and enhance dark skies, as part of the Special Quality of the overall sense of tranquillity, sense of remoteness and naturalness/wildness of the National Landscape, and in collaboration with stakeholders, to monitor and protect this aspect of natural beauty.

2.0 PURPOSE OF THE POSITION STATEMENT

2.1 The primary purpose of Position Statements is to expand on relevant policies and Strategic Objectives within the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan. They provide context, guidance and recommendations in relation to specific policies and associated issues. They do not create new policies.

2.2 The recommendations intend to help local authorities, particularly plan-making bodies, as well as relevant stakeholders, including those involved in decision-making:

- have regard, and positively contribute, to the purpose of AONB designation;
- ensure the purpose of AONB designation is not compromised by development and that the outstanding natural beauty of the Wye Valley National Landscape is conserved and enhanced;
- fulfil the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Planning Policy Wales (PPW), Planning Practice Guidance (or, where relevant, National Policy Statements), and Technical Advice Notes, with regards to AONB designation and the factors that contribute to their natural beauty;
- take account of relevant case law;
- have regard to and be consistent with the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan and guidance/position statements published by the Partnership;
- emulate best practice in the Wye Valley National Landscape and other Protected Landscapes; and
- develop a consistent and coordinated approach to relevant issues across the whole of the Wye Valley National Landscape, and its setting⁶.

2.3 The Wye Valley National Landscape derives much of its beauty from its tranquillity and rural character. To help protect these special qualities, with regards to dark skies and light pollution, relevant strategic objectives of the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan include WV-L1, WV-F1, WV-D1, WV-D2, WV-D3, WV-T2, WV-T3, WV-C2, WV-E2, WV-S4, WV-A1 and WV-P1.

⁶ Four local authority areas overlap with the Wye Valley National Landscape, with each with local authority having its own development plan.

2.4 The purpose is also to promote good practice in external lighting and internal light spill by fostering behavioural change, reducing unnecessary artificial light pollution by effective design. Effective design for dark skies will enable many of us to see the stars more clearly whilst also saving energy, reducing nuisance and minimising the impact of lighting on wildlife and people, contributing to protecting the wider special qualities, defined character and overall sense of tranquillity of the National Landscape.

2.5 More fundamentally, this guidance aims to change behaviour within the Malvern Hills National Landscape and its setting, by establishing a proactive dark sky ‘mind-set’. This means looking at the impacts beyond the immediate areas to be lit and ensuring that relevant standards, legislation, landscape assessments and other professional guidance’s are followed.

2.6 To protect dark skies appropriately, we all need to expand our ‘mind-set’ from local need to the wider landscape impact using appropriate guidance and standards that should be referenced at different spatial levels.

3.0 STATUS OF THE POSITION STATEMENT

3.1 Position Statements are supplementary to the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan. For development proposals to be compatible with the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan, they should also be compatible with the relevant position statement.

3.2 The Wye Valley AONB Management Plan is a material planning consideration in decision-making. However, it must be acknowledged that in a plan-led planning system, it is the policies of the relevant adopted local authority development plan that have the greatest weight. As such, within this planning system, the hierarchy is as follows⁷:

The adopted development plan comprises the Local Planning Authority Development Plan, ‘made’ Neighbourhood Development Plans (in England only, when adopted), and Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 (Wales only), in which decision-making is to be taken in accordance with, unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise.

The Wye Valley AONB Management Plan, like the National Planning Policy Framework and Technical Advice Notes, are material planning considerations, but do not form part

⁷ In England, Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states: “If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.” The NPPF (2023) is itself a significant material consideration, although it is acknowledged regarding the presumption in favour of sustainable development under Paragraph 11, particularly in relation to plan-making and decision-making.

On Wednesday 13th September 2023, the DEFRA Secretary of State tabled a [Written Ministerial Statement](#) setting out a package of measures to support nature recovery in Protected Landscapes. The package includes a commitment to new legislation through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (2023), which will enhance National Park and AONB Management Plans by placing a stronger requirement on partners to contribute to their delivery.

In Wales, national planning guidance prepared by the Welsh Government is taken into account as a material planning consideration, along with policies in the Local Planning Authority development plan for the area, and other material planning considerations.

of the adopted development plan. Wye Valley National Landscape Position Statements and guidance supplement the AONB Management Plan.

4.0 LIGHT POLLUTION

4.1 Defining Light Pollution

4.1.1 There is increasing pressure in the National Landscape to accommodate:

- All types of development, particularly the expansion of settlements within and the setting of the National Landscape
- Demand for standardised highway lighting, particularly at junctions
- Increased use of 'security' lighting on building exteriors
- Floodlighting of sports pitches and riding arenas
- Architectural designs incorporating large areas of glazing

4.1.2 Artificial light is relied on by many to live their lives. However, light shining where or when it is not required pollutes our highly valued dark skies. Dark skies are important for health, nature and protecting the natural beauty of the National Landscape.

4.1.3 Light pollution, also known as obtrusive light, is the presence of unwanted, inappropriate, or excessive artificial lighting, and refers to the adverse effect of any artificial light on the environment. Light pollution takes several forms, including, but not limited to:

- Light trespass – when light enters a neighbouring property;
- Over illumination – where there is excessive light;
- Glare – often from an unshielded light source resulting in contrasting dark shadows and excessively bright areas;
- Clutter – excessive groupings of lights which can cause confusion and distraction from obstacles intended to be illuminated;
- Sky glow over areas where light is escaping upwards; and
- The possibility of significant residual impacts due to the presence of the lights and the illuminance it provides.

4.1.4 Light pollution is often caused by poorly designed lighting schemes, with inappropriate, excessive or poorly installed lighting equipment. Light pollution is made worse by blue-white light which can be found in many (Light Emitting Diode) LED lamps. The blue-white light can penetrate the atmosphere much further than yellow and orange lights. A team of biologists from the University of Exeter have recently found that human

illumination of the planet is growing in range and intensity about 2% annually⁸. Yet, it can easily be reduced whilst having enough light for the required task.

4.2 What are Dark Skies?

4.2.1 A dark sky is a place where the night sky is relatively free of interference from artificial light. Under such conditions, you should be able to see the Milky Way overhead and other astronomical features such as the Andromeda Galaxy with the naked eye. Light domes from sky glow are small and confined to the horizon and the landscape is continuous in darkness with few light sources.

4.2.2 Sky quality is usually expressed on the 'Bortle Scale', which shows the level of stellar visibility measured using naked-eye limiting magnitude (NELM). Under better dark skies the Milky Way will be clearly visible, whereas a suburban sky in the UK will just be dark enough to see the Milky Way. As everyone's eyes vary and as we get older our sight fades, we cannot depend on our own perception of sky quality.

4.2.3 To improve the consistency of experience between all places worldwide, sky quality is normally measured using a hand-held Sky Quality Meter (SQM), which is a standardised requirement of an International DarkSky Association place application. Most ground measurements use a Sky Quality meter (see section 2) either with a [Unihedron meter](#), or a [TESS photometer](#) which cost around £150. The SQM returns a value of the brightness (magnitudes) of an area (arc second²) of the sky expressed as a number from 0 to 22 – the higher the number, the darker the sky. To see the Milky Way, a sky measuring 20.5 and above is needed. 21 and above is rare in the UK. Volunteers within the Kerne Bridge Dark Skies Project have measured 21+ in some places in the National Landscape⁹. These measurements indicate that in the skies above the National Landscape, the Milky Way can be clearly visible at 20% contrast to background when overhead. There is no significant variation in Zenith brightness across the National Landscape in the same conditions on the same night. This is because, with few large settlements, the zenith brightness is affected by light pollution from distant cities rather than from local light sources.

4.2.4 Sky Quality can be measured either by looking down at the Earth from above and measuring the upward light or by measuring the brightness of the sky from the ground. One can also get a rough estimation of sky quality by counting the number of stars in the constellation of Orion which can be seen in winter months. Observers can count the number of stars within the rectangle formed by the shoulders and feet. In a city centre you will be lucky to make out 10 stars, whereas under a good Milky Way dark sky in the UK you should be able to see around 25-30. Theoretically, there are 40 stars visible to

⁸ [Home page news - Artificial night lighting has widespread impacts on nature - University of Exeter](#)

⁹ <http://www.wyevalleysociety.org.uk/events.php>

the naked eye within Orion, but one would need to be in a very dark place and have excellent eyes to see them all.

4.3 Dark Skies in the Wye Valley National Landscape

4.3.1 The sky at night (or by day), together with basic landform are the only physical aspects of the present-day environment of inland Britain that are still fundamentally largely natural in character. Vegetation, land use, fields and settlements have been shaped into their present character or created through human influences over the last 12,000 years.

4.3.2 As a typically rural landscape, the Wye Valley skies are of regional importance to residents within and surrounding the National Landscape. Whilst the Wye Valley does not yet have an International Dark-Sky Association (IDA) place status, other UK protected landscapes have achieved such designation and, it is still important to protect skies that could qualify for this accreditation at a later date.

4.3.3 The conservation and enhancement of dark night skies brings several benefits:

- Landscape character – Dark skies and landscapes are a characteristic of most of the National Landscape and is therefore covered by the primary purpose of ‘conservation and enhancement’ of the AONB designation. The Wye Valley AONB Management Plan references dark sky outcomes and strategic objectives pertaining to light pollution follow on from this. This should encourage local authorities to take dark skies into account when developing Local Plans and determining planning applications. It provides opportunities for communities, individuals and businesses to take account of dark skies and adopt good lighting practices.
- Enjoyment and understanding – There is increasing public interest in night skies, in part encouraged by television programmes such as Stargazing Live and the Sky at Night. Stargazing events organised by astronomical societies are proving popular. Areas of dark skies are increasingly important for people to experience natural darkness and see a starlit sky.
- Wildlife – Life on earth has evolved with the natural cycle of day and night. Species have evolved to cope with and take advantage of natural darkness. Artificial lighting has an impact on species and ecosystems interrupting migration patterns, predator-prey relationships and the circadian rhythm of many organisms leading to stress and disruption of breeding patterns.
- Heritage – Light pollution is a very recent phenomenon in heritage terms and has only become a seriously intrusive problem in the last 50 years. The Wye Valley has a wealth of historic sites for which the night sky together with natural topography are the only largely unchanged aspects of their surroundings. An important characteristic of the Wye Valley is the strong character of historic settlements set within their rural

surroundings with (until recent years) little suburban expansion. Dark skies are therefore an important aspect of the setting of the National Landscapes' historic monuments and places and how they are experienced and appreciated within the landscape.

- Human health and well-being – Humans have also evolved with the natural cycle of light and darkness and naturally adhere to a circadian rhythm. Photoreceptors in the human eye regulate the circadian rhythm which controls biological functions including alertness, temperature regulation and melatonin production.
- Economic benefit – Evidence from existing Dark Sky Parks and Reserves show that designation has led to 'Dark Sky Tourism', particularly in winter months. This is providing business in winter months, benefiting the local economy in an otherwise quiet time of year, as Dark Sky tourism often involves an overnight stay.

4.3.4 The overall sense of tranquillity, sense of remoteness and naturalness/wildness is one of the 'Special Qualities¹⁰' of the Wye Valley National Landscape¹¹. Light Pollution is recognised as a particular pressure within the National Landscape. In terms of effects upon the National Landscape:

- Poorly designed and/or standardised lighting can degrade landscape character;
- Poorly designed or directed lighting can disrupt biodiversity and disturb species behaviour, particularly bats;
- Poorly located or directed lighting can confuse motorists, degrade landscape character and waste energy; and
- Modern architectural designs with large areas of glazing can appear as boxes of light in the countryside at night, and glinting glazing in the daytime.

4.3.5 The Countryside Charity (CPRE) campaigns to raise awareness about light pollution. In 2015, with support from several AONB Partnerships and others, they used Land Use Consultants (LUC) to create a Night Blight map showing the relative darkness of the night sky at an effective resolution down to 500 metres (Figure 1). This scale makes it valuable at a local level, providing a consistent baseline mapping of the issue. The mapping was based on satellite images showing light pollution from the sky; not light meter readings taken at ground level.

¹⁰ Those aspects of the area's natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage, that make the area distinctive and are valuable, particularly at a national scale.

¹¹ As identified as SQ12 within the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan 2021-2026.

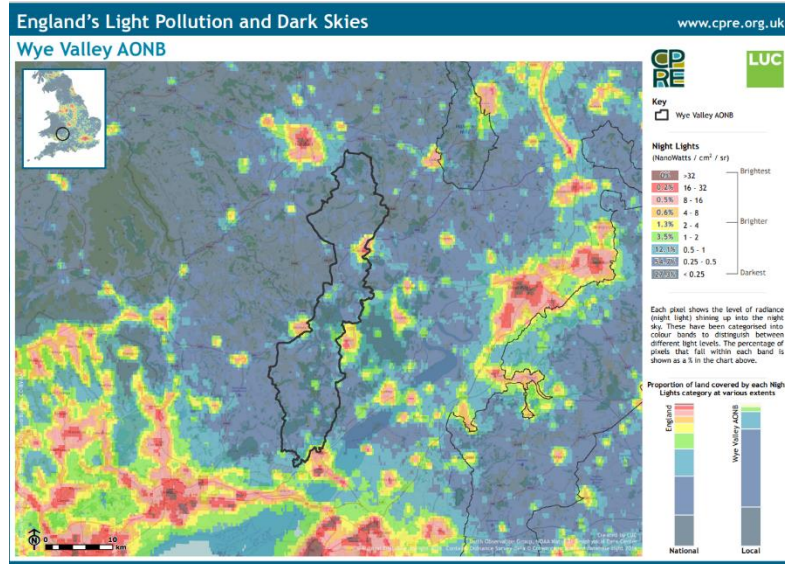


Figure 1 – Light pollution and dark skies in the Wye Valley National Landscape. To expand the map and find out more information about the Night Blight mapping go to: [England's Light Pollution and Dark Skies Map \(cpre.org.uk\)](http://England's Light Pollution and Dark Skies Map (cpre.org.uk))

4.3.6 The map along with the work undertaken through the Kerne Bridge Dark Skies Project shows the Wye Valley National Landscape does suffer with artificial light pollution from some settlements, motorway service stations and economic hubs. Light is particularly an issue from the surrounding urban areas in the 'setting' of the National Landscape. However, 27.3% of the sky over the National Landscape is as dark as any in the UK, and another 54.7% falls into the next darkest category (there are nine categories altogether). There are clearly significant areas of quality dark skies to protect from excessive light pollution.

4.3.7 Recommendations:

- The Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership recognises that dark skies can bring benefits to landscape character, enjoyment and understanding, wildlife, heritage, human health and well-being, as well as economic gain and tourism.
- The Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership acknowledges that there are areas of the National Landscape and its Setting which suffer with artificial light pollution however there are also significant areas of quality dark skies to protect within the National Landscape from excessive light pollution, to improve the overall sense of tranquillity, sense of remoteness and naturalness/wildness of the National Landscape.

5.0 THE EFFECTS OF LIGHT POLLUTION

5.1 Nature and Wildlife

5.1.1 In a paper published in Nature Ecology and Evolution (November 2020¹²), biologists from the University of Exeter concluded that artificial light pollution is impacting the hormone levels, breeding cycles, activity patterns and predator-prey interactions of a broad range of species.

5.1.2 Light impacts wildlife in several ways:

- Songbirds – lighting at night triggers a dawn response, so they become exhausted, affecting feeding and breeding.
- Frogs and toads – having artificial lights where amphibians live can disrupt nocturnal activity, interfering with reproduction and reducing populations.
- Bats – artificial light on a bat roost disturbs bats and may lead them to desert it. Light falling on the access point of a roost delays bats from emerging, shortening the time they have for feeding and, in turn, reducing their reproductive rates. Light on the flightpath of bats can also lead to them deserting their roost¹³.
- Insects – it is estimated that a third of insects attracted to artificial lights will die because of this encounter. Reflected light can also be a problem because illuminated shiny surfaces look like water. This attracts aquatic insects, such as egg-laying female dragonflies, and can lead to unsuccessful breeding.
- Trees – have evolved with a regular, predictable transition from day to night, following the natural patterns of the sun and moon. Artificial light extends the natural day, changing the flowering patterns of trees, promoting continued growth. This prevents them from having dormant periods, which trees need to thrive.

5.1.3 The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 is the principal mechanism for the protection of wildlife in Great Britain. Under the Act, it is illegal to disturb certain species, including bats, and artificial light can constitute an offence. While some species are particularly sensitive to artificial light, all wildlife and their habitats can be disrupted by artificial light. The Institution of Lighting Professionals and the Bat Conservation Trust recently updated Guidance note 08/23 Bats and artificial lighting in the UK to help guide lighting assessments of bat species¹⁴.

5.2 Health and Well-being

5.2.1 Lights shining directly into windows can cause disruption such as finding it difficult to get to sleep. However, there are other less obvious health issues light pollution can cause.

¹² [Volume 4 Issue 11, November 2020 \(nature.com\)](#)

¹³ Because artificial light is a particular issue for bats, the Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP) and Bat Conservation Trust have produced Guidance Note 8 Bats and artificial lighting <https://theilp.org.uk/resources/>

¹⁴ [Guidance Note 8 Bats and Artificial Lighting | Institution of Lighting Professionals \(theilp.org.uk\)](#)

5.2.2 Humans have evolved with the natural cycle of light and dark that comes from the sun, so adhere to a circadian rhythm or body clock. Light – especially natural daylight – is very important to maintaining this rhythm. Artificial light at the wrong time disrupts the production of a hormone called melatonin. Melatonin is important as it induces sleep, boosts the immune system, lowers cholesterol, and helps with the function of the thyroid and pancreas, among other things. When our natural cycle is disrupted, it can lead to lower immunity, increased risk of disease, mood instability and risk of mental illness. It is important to maintain bright light during the day and relative darkness at night¹⁵.

5.3 Safety

5.3.1 To road users, glare can be highly dangerous. Glare and insensitive lighting can cause accidents when motorists are distracted or blinded by artificial light spilling out onto the road.

5.4 Crime

5.4.1 It is not a complete given that installing a light for ‘security’ deters crime. There is no proven link between lighting levels and crime rates. In trials where street lighting has been switched off, there has been no increase in crime rates. In fact, bright exterior lights may create contrasting dark spots that criminals can hide in.

5.5 Cost

5.5.1 It costs considerable money to power the grid system to provide lighting. Wasted power through badly designed, installed or used lighting presents an unnecessary cost to businesses, homes and public utilities.

5.6 Energy and carbon emissions

5.6.1 Wasted energy from power used for excessive lighting contributes to carbon emissions and climate change. LED lighting can reduce energy consumption significantly and, therefore, the amount of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emitted. However, low-energy bright lighting is often achieved by using a blue-white LED which can be very damaging to human and wildlife health.

5.7 Landscape, cultural value and science

5.7.1 Artificial lighting is degrading the character of rural landscapes, eroding and destroying their tranquility and sense of remoteness. As the number of places we can see truly dark skies reduces, it makes it increasingly difficult to view the sky at night. These

¹⁵ <http://www.bre.co.uk/filelibrary/Briefing%20papers/Lighting-and-health-infographic2.pdf>

differences are clearly shown in the Bortle Dark Sky Scale¹⁶. Light pollution is also seriously undermining the ability of British-based astronomers, both professional and amateur, to lead in this expanding field of science.

5.8 Recommendation:

- The Partnership acknowledges that existing artificial light pollution throughout the Wye Valley National Landscape and its Setting is undermining and adversely affecting wildlife and nature, health and well-being, safety, crime, energy and carbon emissions, as well as landscape and visual amenity, cultural value and science.

6.0 LIGHT POLLUTION CONTROL IN THE UK

6.1 Light Pollution and the Law

6.1.1 There are limited laws dealing with light pollution. In 2005, Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 – Statutory Nuisance (para 79-fb) covering England and Wales, was extended to include light nuisance, “*fb – artificial light emitted from premises so as to be prejudicial to health or a nuisance*”

6.1.2 Local authorities must take reasonable steps to investigate complaints of artificial light nuisances. If a nuisance exists or occurs, an abatement notice to cease will be issued. Lights shining into neighbouring properties can be considered a ‘statutory nuisance’ under the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

6.1.3 It is important to note that the threshold and process for nuisance lighting is different from the planning regime. A nuisance requires a ‘victim’ who can show that they are being negatively impacted by lighting that has probably not received any obtrusive light reduction design. The harm is quantified by directly measuring obtrusive light spill metrics that fall into internal spaces by Environmental Health Officers. In contrast, planning control requires that light spill is reduced, ideally before the lights are installed, and to comply with obtrusive light requirements.

6.1.4 The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 is the principal mechanism for the protection of wildlife in Great Britain. Under the Act, it is illegal to disturb certain species, including bats, and artificial light can constitute an offence. Under the Act, it is illegal to disturb certain species, including bats, and artificial light can constitute an offence.

6.2 Light Pollution and the Planning Framework

¹⁶ [The Bortle Dark-Sky Scale \(umt.edu\)](http://www.umt.edu)

6.2.1 It is accepted that some lighting can be installed without requiring planning permission, under permitted development. Lighting that does require explicit permission includes for instance:

- Lighting installations which materially alter the external appearance of a building
- Lighting installations on Listed Buildings which affect their character
- Illumination of outdoor advertisements
- Most forms of lighting on columns [e.g. sports, arena, street, security lighting].

6.2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) for England provides the baseline for local authorities when developing planning policy, including light pollution:

“191. Planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. In doing so they should: a) mitigate and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impacts resulting from noise from new development – and avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and the quality of life; b) identify and protect tranquil areas which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason; and c) limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.”

6.2.3 The NPPF also references the importance of conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty (Section 15), which would include darkness. Paragraph 182 requires that ‘great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing’ protected landscapes which have the highest status of protection. Paragraph 182 also requires that development is limited and sensitively designed to ‘avoid or minimise adverse effects’ on the designated area. This would include well designed lighting and understanding the full impact on darkness. Paragraph 183 also note that permission for major development be refused other than in exceptional circumstances.

6.2.4 Planning Policy Wales (PPW) provides further baseline for local authorities in terms of plan-making:

“6.8.3 Lighting to provide security can be particularly important in rural areas or for specific purposes such as defence or to create calming environments. Where this is the case, planning authorities should adopt policies for lighting, including the control of light pollution, in their development plans. 6.8.4 Planning authorities can attach conditions to planning permissions for new developments that include the design and operation of lighting systems, for example, requiring energy-efficient design and to prevent light pollution.” (Planning Policy Wales)

6.2.5 Going further, PPW recognises the importance of designated AONBs, stating at 6.3.7 that planning authorities should give great weight to conserving and enhancing natural beauty, and should have regard to the wildlife, cultural heritage and social and economic well-being of the areas. At 6.3.8, along with National Parks, AONBs are of equal status in terms of landscape and scenic beauty, and must be afforded the highest status of protection from inappropriate developments". The special qualities of designated areas should be given weight in the development planning and the development management process. Proposals in AONBs must be carefully assessed to ensure that their effects on those features which the designation is intended to protect are acceptable. The contribution that development makes to the sustainable management of the designated area must be considered (6.3.9, PPW).

6.2.6 Section 85 of the Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000 places a requirement of a general duty of public bodies, which should include the impact of light pollution as, "*in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in an area of outstanding natural beauty in England, a relevant authority other than a devolved Welsh authority must seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty. In exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in an area of outstanding natural beauty in England, a devolved Welsh authority must have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty.*"

7.0 MEASURING LIGHT

7.0.1 Light is composed of individual wavelengths across the electromagnetic spectrum that give lamps their colour and strength. To ensure lighting designs are effective in reducing light pollution it is useful to understand the different measurements of light and how they impact on light pollution. By considering a few factors when installing lighting and/or specifying lighting for the task required, one can save energy and money, whilst minimising artificial light pollution and its harmful effects. Any manufacturer or supplier reference to fittings being 'Dark-Sky friendly', or similar wording, should not be taken as an assumption of acceptability.

7.0.2 To specify appropriate lighting according to the need and situation, it is helpful to understand the different measures of light – Lumens, Kelvins, Lux and Candela:

- Lumens measures how much light is emitted from a light source in all directions.
- Kelvins measures the colour temperature of the light.
- Lux measures the amount of light that falls on a surface.
- Candela is the intensity of light as visible to the human eye in a specific direction.

7.1 Lumens

7.1.1 Bulbs used to be sold according to ‘watts’, which was the amount of energy input to the bulb or light fitting; the light output, however, are now categorised by their lumen output. Figure 2 shows the approximate levels of lumen output from different types of bulbs, and the amount of energy that can be saved in comparison with a standard bulb.

7.1.2 The figure below provides power wattages for different types of bulb brightness that can be found in most retailers. For most minor domestic purposes, 500 lumens are normally more than enough. For lamps greater than 500 lumens, one should use shielding or luminaires that direct all light downward.

EFFICIENCY	Least		Most	
BULB TYPE	STANDARD	HALOGEN	CFL	LED
LUMENS				
450	40 W	29 W	9 W	8 W
800	60 W	43 W	14 W	13 W
1100	75 W	53 W	19 W	17 W
1600	100 W	72 W	23 W	20 W
RATED LIFE	1 year	1-3 years	6-10 years	15-25 years
SAVINGS	×	up to 30%	up to 75%	up to 80%

Figure 2 – Bulb out in lumens¹⁷ -

7.2 Kelvins

7.2.1 Manufacturers describe light bulbs using phrases such as ‘cool white’ and ‘warm light’. A temperature measure known as the Kelvin scale (K) is used to determine the colour of the light. Colour Correlated Temperature (CCT), which is measured in K, describes the colour appearance of light. The higher the colour temperature, the bluer the light will appear. It is blue-white light that is particularly damaging to dark skies and should be avoided. Many lamps will state their colour temperature with some abbreviating as ‘cool’ (5000K or more) or ‘warm’ white (3000-4000K).

7.2.2 It is regarded that 3000K and less is appropriate for dark skies, ideally 2700k. For lighting near key ecological receptors such as wildlife sites, further reductions in CCT are recommend, ideally achieving <2200K where appropriate.

¹⁷ [What Are Lumens And Why Do They Matter - Universal Lighting \(universal-lighting.co.uk\)](http://www.universal-lighting.co.uk)

7.2.3 Figure 3 below shows the Colour Correlated Temperature in more detail.

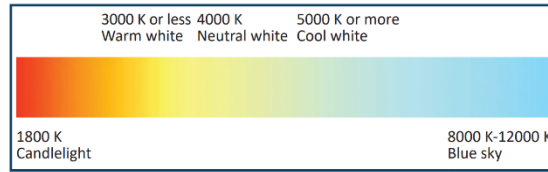


Figure 3 – Colour Correlated Temperature diagram

7.3 Lux

7.3.1 Lux is a measurement of illuminance (E_m) – the amount of light on a surface to do a particular task. A single lux is equal to one lumen per square metre. Lux level will change with changes in distance or bulb type.

7.3.2 For comparison, a sunny day can be 10000 lux, a cloudy day 1000 lux and a full moon 0.3 lux. 15 lux is sufficient for a rural car park, 5 lux for rural domestic lighting.

7.4 Candela

7.4.1 Candela is the base measurement for describing luminous intensity. It states how bright a light source is and, therefore, how far away an object can still be seen. It is the light intensity from any point in a single direction from the light source.

7.4.2 High levels of intensity in any direction could contribute to neighbour’s obstruction and glare issues. The internal optics and lenses of the whole light – the luminaire – will direct lamp light into a beam direction.

7.5 Watts and Lumens

7.5.1 To achieve the right illumination (lux), Table 1 below recommends LED wattages (W) and lumen values (lm) to achieve approximate levels of illuminance for certain standardised tasks. While they are more relevant to non-domestic installations, any householder should aim to purchase LEDs at the recommended level to achieve minimum lighting footprints. If in doubt one should consult a professional lighting consultant.

Table 1 - Approximate Target illumination levels

	Approximate Target illumination levels (Typical levels as listed in BSI and HSE documents)				
Area to be lit m ²	(5 lux) DOMESTIC areas, walkways	(10 lux) DOMESTIC driveways, small car parks, traffic	(20 lux) Farmyards, clearance and excavation	(50 lux) Loading and unloading, vehicle turning,	(100 lux) Sports, fine detail and precision work

		areas for slow moving vehicles		construction areas, equipment sheds	
25	3w 400lm	6w 500lm	11w 1000lm	30w 3000lm	CONSULT LIGHTING SPECIALIST
50	5w 500lm	11w 1000lm	23w 2500lm	60w 6500lm	CONSULT LIGHTING SPECIALIST
100	11w 1000lm	23w 2300lm	50w 5000lm	CONSULT LIGHTING SPECIALIST	CONSULT LIGHTING SPECIALIST
250	30w 3000lm	60w 6500lm	CONSULT LIGHTING SPECIALIST	CONSULT LIGHTING SPECIALIST	CONSULT LIGHTING SPECIALIST
500+	60w 6500lm	CONSULT LIGHTING SPECIALIST	CONSULT LIGHTING SPECIALIST	CONSULT LIGHTING SPECIALIST	CONSULT LIGHTING SPECIALIST

7.5.2 As a general guide, lighting using 11W or 1000 lumens or less is general a low risk (Green cells). Lighting above 11W and 1000 lumens but less than 60W and 6500 lumens is a medium risk (Orange cells). Lighting above 60W and 6500 lumens is high risk (Red Cells) and that the lighting should be properly designed in consultation with a lighting specialist.

7.6 Recommendations:

- The Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership recognises that to specify appropriate lighting according to the need and situation, it is helpful to understand the different measures of light – Lumens, Kelvins, Lux and Candela.
- Colour Correlated Temperature (CCT), which is measured in K, describes the colour appearance of light. It is regarded that 3000K and less is appropriate for dark skies, ideally 2700k.
- To achieve the right illumination (lux), Table 1 of this Position Statement is advised by the Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership for recommended LED wattages (W) and lumen values (lm) to achieve approximate levels of illuminance for certain standardised tasks. Users should aim to purchase LEDs at the recommended low-risk level to achieve necessary lighting footprints. For most minor domestic

purposes, 500 lumens are normally more than enough. For lamps greater than 500 lumens, one should use shielding or luminaires that direct all light downward.

8.0 PRINCIPLES OF GOOD LIGHTING

8.1 To minimise light pollution, the following best practice design principles should be followed to ensure good lighting reduces artificial light pollution and its impact on dark skies. With any installation, domestic or otherwise the aim should be, **the right light, in the right place at the right time:**

- **Principle 1 – Useful** – Any light should be justified with a clear purpose and benefit. The overall lighting impact should be appropriate for both task and local setting, regardless of design.
- **Principle 2 – Targeted** – Light should be directed to where it is needed and not spill into neighbouring spaces. All light above the horizontal should be avoided. Zero upward light is essential. Asymmetric lights should be used where possible to reduce light spill, lower mounting heights, improving efficiency and eliminating upward light.
- **Principle 3 – Low light** – Lights should provide the right illuminance referenced against design standards where appropriate. Do not use needlessly over-bright lights as there will be more pollution and unnecessary glare. Use 500 lumens and less for domestic lighting. Lights should be installed at their lowest practical height.
- **Principle 4 – Controlled** – Turn off when not needed with manual switches, timers or proximity (PIR) sensors. Ensure lights are dimmed or selectively activated when activity is low, to reduce light and energy use.
- **Principle 5 – Designed** – For larger non-domestic installations, professional designers should be consulted to ensure illuminance, and control of spill light and glare, are appropriate for the task. Use the minimum possible number of lights and adhere to relevant standards.
- **Principle 6 – Colour** – Lamps should be 3000K or less and ideally 2700K. These are sometimes described as ‘warm white’. Lamps above 4000K described as ‘neutral’ and ‘cool’ should be avoided as they generally have more blue light within the spectrum.

8.2 Cranborne Chase National Landscape Partnership have a helpful factsheet giving examples of dark-sky light fittings, along with manufacturers and distributors (last updated in February 2019): Examples of Dark-Sky compliant lighting units¹⁸ as well as examples of lighting units for use on new builds and refurbishments¹⁹.

8.3 A well-designed, well-installed, dark-sky friendly lighting unit will not need any shielding. In certain circumstances, however, a shield may be useful, such as when lights

¹⁸ [Good Lighting Advice - Chasing Stars Cranborne Chase AONB Dark Skies Bid](#)

¹⁹ [Feb-22-Good-Practice-7b1-DNS-fittings.pdf \(cranbornechase.org.uk\)](#)

can be seen from surrounding key viewpoints or up-lights cannot be avoided. Shielding usually takes the form of cowls, louvres (or baffles), and/or shields.

8.4 When selecting a shield, choose types that are sympathetically designed to their surroundings. In situations where lights will be seen from surrounding key viewpoints, it may be possible to add a physical barrier, such as a hedge, tree line or fencing, to soften the impact of the lighting. Existing woodland or wildlife areas should not be used as a barrier, as light shining into these can be harmful. New planting should be in accordance with the relevant landscape management zone, as identified within the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan.

8.5 Other lighting considerations

- Low-level pathway lighting – Paths do not always need bright lights. In fact, bright lights can be uncomfortable or dazzle. Low-level bollards with shielded lights can be considered, but should not shine upwards or sideways.
- Upgrading existing lighting – Planning replacement lighting may provide an opportunity to reduce light pollution. Relocating, adjusting direction, and installing sensors are all ways to improve existing stock.
- Surfaces – Different surfaces reflect light differently, so the type of surface required for an installation should be considered. Darker colours, such as dark greens or asphalt greys and blacks, will reflect less light, cause less glare, and reduce the visibility of the installation. White or mirrored surfaces, including water, will reflect more light. This can be a problem for some wildlife, who can mistake reflected surface for water.
- Garden Lighting – Decorative garden lights also add to the overall impact of lighting. The same principles as for light fittings should be considered.
- Visual impact of lighting equipment – During the day, the visual impact of lighting equipment including poles, brackets and cabling, should be considered, especially in a protected and/or historic landscape. Tall columns may give less glare at night because the floodlights have a steeper downward angle, but they may be more intrusive by day because of their visual effects.
- New technology – Innovations are constantly becoming commercially viable although has to be assessed to ensure that, by solving one problem, it is not creating another.
- Windows and internal lights – Allowing daylight into a building is crucial for our circadian rhythm as, with our busy lives, most of us do not get enough daylight. However, light overspilling from inside buildings can add significantly to light pollution. In general, internal lights shine horizontally and, in the case of sky lights, directly upwards. In order to reduce light pollution from buildings:
 - Ensure windows have curtains/blinds that stop light spilling out, and are used.

- Use electronically timed lighting and blinds/shutters linked to 'smart home' systems to allow flexible operation.
- Face glazing into courtyards or associated buildings, rather than towards green spaces or neighbours.
- Try 'smart glass', which is made by passing electrical current through the material to change its transparency.

8.6 Recommendations:

- To minimise light pollution, the Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership advises following six best practice design principles when considering new lighting to ensure the right light, in the right place and for the right time:
 - Useful
 - Targeted
 - Low light
 - Controlled
 - Designed
 - Colour
- A shield may be useful, when lighting can be seen from surrounding key viewpoints but should be sympathetically designed to their surroundings and have regard to material planning considerations which avoid creating a persistent and dominant feature out of keeping with the landscape of the National Landscape, and/or damage Special Qualities in the National Landscape.

9.0 PROMOTING GOOD PRACTICE

9.0.1 The following section provides advice for different users and types of situations, including domestic/householders, commercial, farms, sports and advertising.

9.1 Domestic/Householder

9.1.1 The first consideration is whether lighting is needed at all – light should be avoided unless it has a clear and necessary purpose. As minor fittings are not generally subject to planning control or need a lighting designer, it is important that users and homeowners installing domestic lights understand the difference between good and bad lighting. What can seem an enticing deal at the retailers can turn out to be inappropriate, a nuisance to neighbours and overly polluting. By following these simple specifications, homeowners can ensure good lighting that protects dark skies.

9.1.2 Minor Lights Specifications:

- Lamps of less than 500 lumens (~5W LED) is fine for navigating a garden path, and 1,000 lumens (11W LED) is acceptable for those requiring a little extra light for most uses, like car parking.
- Homeowners should not need a light greater than 1,500 lumens (~15w LED) for domestic uses.
- Anything above 500 lumens, where justified, should be fully shielded so the light goes downwards. LED lights are best to achieve downward light.
- Proximity sensors such as infra-red (PIR) should be used to light only when needed. Separate sensors can angle the light without comprising its function (vice versa).
- Check lights do not overspill into surrounding vegetation or natural areas.

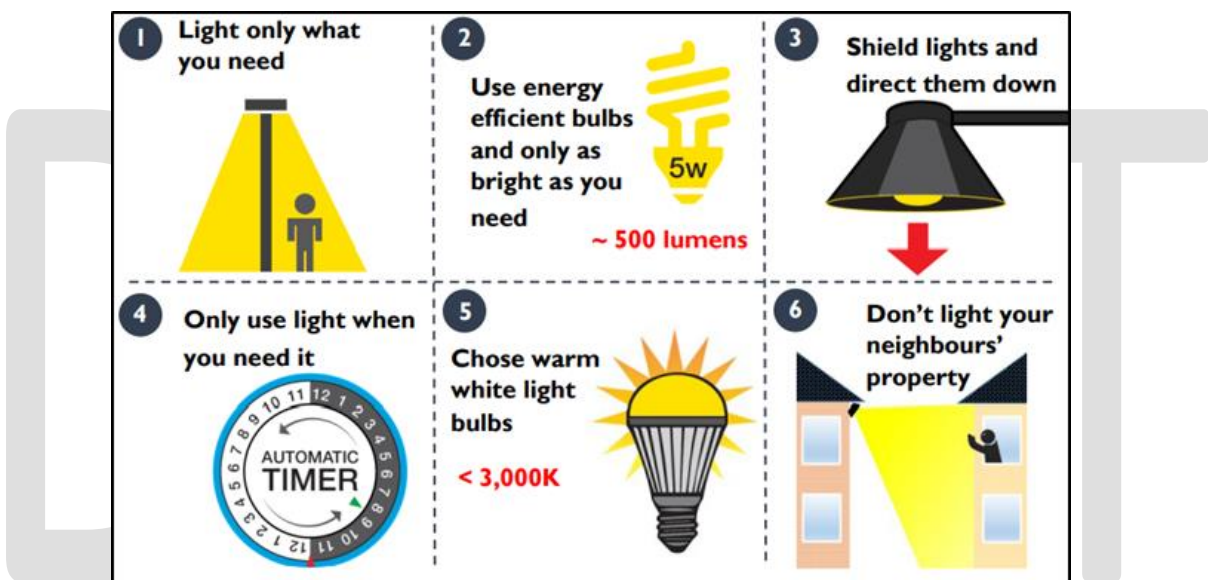


Figure 4 – Best principles for minor and domestic lighting – International Dark-Sky Association and South Downs National Park Authority

9.1.3 Domestic lights and also internal light spill can be relatively unobtrusive provided they are low powered and installed correctly. In addition to the advice above, the Institution of Lighting Professionals has produced further domestic guidance. [ILP - GN09: Domestic exterior lighting: getting it right!](#). This leaflet advises on appropriate lighting for the task in hand, providing the level of illumination required but not becoming a cause for concern to adjacent residents or affecting the natural environment surrounding your property. If done well, one could get a good view of the night sky and have a low visual impact on the landscapes and their characteristic tranquillity. Figure 5 below shows how easily applying such principles can improve dark skies in the Wye Valley National Landscape.

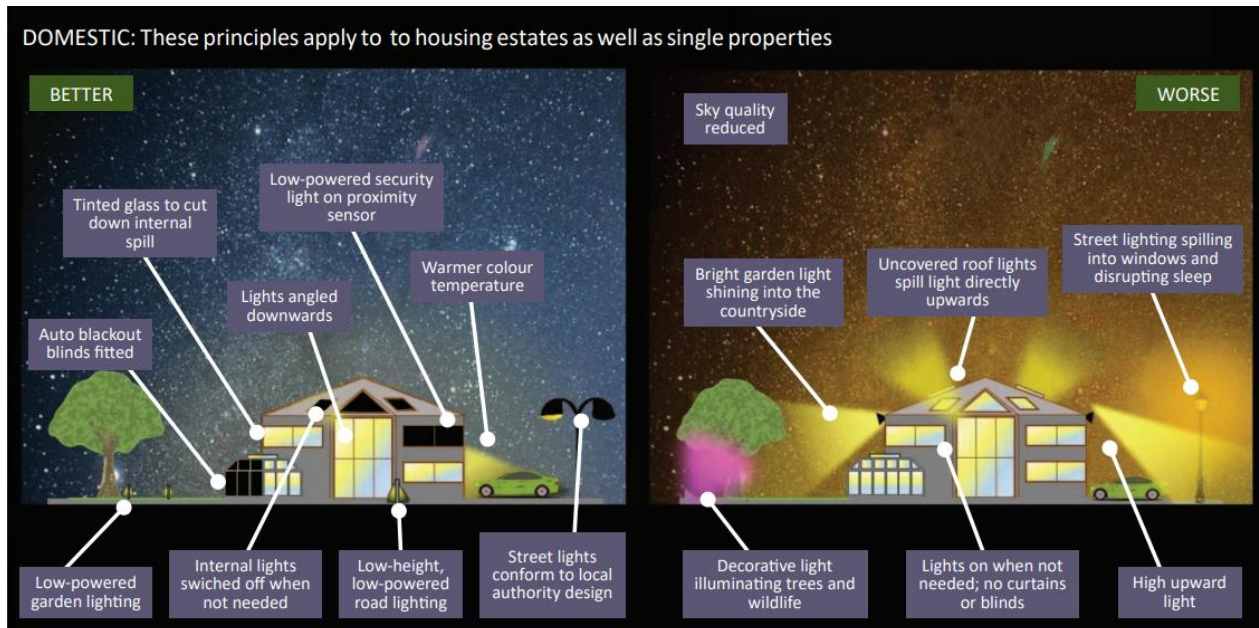


Figure 5: Minimising light pollution from domestic lighting (from South Downs National Park Authority: Dark Skies Technical Advice Note 2018)

9.1.4 Key considerations for external householder lighting include:

- Nuisance to neighbours – Badly installed lighting will always annoy your neighbours and can be a source of bad feeling. To avoid this, ensure you purchase lights under 1500 lumens, point them downwards and away from other properties, and use proximity sensors to turn off when not needed. Install them at the lowest practical height to reduce nuisance. If your light is too powerful and proven to be disruptive you may risk breaching environmental nuisance laws.
- Over lighting in domestic luminaires – While it is tempting to get the best bang for your buck many domestic options are over bright and too powerful for most domestic purposes. You do not need anything more than 1500 lumens and 500-1000 will be sufficient for most domestic uses and aesthetics. County Council Street lights operate at their lowest setting around 3000 lumens, so bear this in mind when installing. Overbright and badly directed light can also be a hazard to oncoming drivers as the glare could be dangerous. If you need more light to illuminate an area, it is better to use more lower powered lights rather than one over-bright luminaire.
- Using minor domestic style lights for commercial needs – Commercial lighting needs are often guided by illuminance standards and require a lighting designer but there may be circumstances where domestic and minor lights installed by the owner without using a lighting designer are more appropriate. For example, office doors, farm-shed entrance or a small pathway may require one single luminaire

rather than a complex design. In these circumstances, this section on minor lighting and the following section on small commercial lighting should provide sufficient guidance to install the right light.

- Aesthetic lights – While it is accepted that exterior lights do change the look and feel of a building or garden, it is important to do this with the ‘less-is-more’ adage in mind. Mood lighting has a better impact when it can be clearly perceived and appreciated and not lost in unnecessary clutter. Garden Wildlife Up lighting of trees should be avoided to benefit wildlife, especially with lights over 500 lumens. However, using red colours will also help as it disrupts wildlife less. Ensure to turn off when not needed.

9.1.5 Internal light spill through domestic glazing can also have a great impact on the night sky quality and the integrity of a dark landscape than external lighting, particularly as architecture is increasingly moving towards full height glazed elevations. If glazing is excessive, of poor quality or points upwards such as rooflights, internal light will present obtrusive light sources, reducing dark skies and disrupting the continuity of the landscape. It is within the control of residents to remove all light spill with proper controls and behaviour.

9.1.6 The figure above, taken together with the below, can further lead to a reduced visual landscape impact:

- Sky lanterns should be avoided.
- Appropriate visual light transmission (VLT) should be considered to reduce amount of light passing through glazing.
- Louvres used to limit glazing extent.
- Internal lights installed further away from glazing.
- Curtain and blinds used.
- Glazing extent meets thermal efficiency building regulations.
- Interior lighting should be compliant with BS workplace standards.
- High gable glazing should be avoided.
- Automated black out blinds used.
- Reduce number of rooflights.

9.1.7 Key considerations for internal light spill include:

- Visible Light Transmission (VLT) is the amount of light that passes through glazing. The VLT level can be selected to reduce the amount of internal spill. For domestic glazing, a VLT of 0.65 is preferred with 0.5 for roof lights.
- Use of automated black out blinds can considerably reduce the amount of internal light spill from roof lights. Some manufacturers of rooflights produce smart systems that trigger on the onset of darkness and can be controlled on mobile devices. Ensure

that the fabric completely eliminates all internal spill. Exterior louvres can also be used and may be a preferred option for walled glazing rather than rooflights.

- Excessive glazing can cause thermal issues as large extents of glazing that let in a large amount of solar radiation can cause houses to overheat. Building regulations require that glazing should not exceed 25% of the floor area to meet energy efficiency building regulations (which does depend on thermal properties of the glass). This can be avoided by reducing the glazing extent or using external shielding/blinds to reduce the solar input. Modern glazing is improving thermal regulation, but limits to the glazing should be considered.
- Large continuous areas of glazing can cause obtrusive landscape impacts. The modern 'grand design' to have large glass walls and gable ends to new dwellings and conversions means there is considerable potential for internal domestic lighting to spill out. Blinds or curtains need to be used in these situations. Linear extents with high levels of internal lighting can be highly visible within a landscape, especially from view tops. The design of modern glazing systems can also be inconsistent with typical building landscape character which produces uncharacteristic impacts in a dark landscape. Consideration should be given to reduce this impact wither by adopting a more characteristic design process, reducing the extent or using external louvres or shielding to reduce the landscape impact.
- Glazing should not exceed 25% of the floor area to meet energy efficiency building regulations (which does depend on thermal properties of the glass).
- Turn off internal lights when not needed or at close of business.
- For new builds, design internal lighting away from windows.

9.1.8 Recommendations:

- The Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership advises that whilst domestic lighting may not usually require planning permission, consideration in plan-making and decision-making should have regard to Section 9.1 of this position statement and the following considerations:
 - 500 lumens for most domestic uses.
 - Downward pointing luminaires.
 - Less than or equal to 3000K Colour Temperature (warm white), ideally 2700K.
 - Have a clear purpose and illumination area.
 - Off when not needed.
- Within any planning application, applicants should therefore ensure to include and make clear:
 - Justification for the lighting describing the relevant task areas
 - Lumen and Colour Temperature levels are shown.
 - Pictures of the luminaires are provided.

- Any deviation from best practice, e.g., using heritage style lanterns on listed buildings, is given.
- That the lighting is not obtrusive under ILP GN01 guidance to neighbours.
- Internal light can also a significant landscape impact through glazing and other transparent surfaces. Designers can reduce the impact of internal light spill by:
 - Using an appropriate visible light transmission solution for the glazing purpose.
 - Limiting the scale, continuity and size of the glazing.
 - Using automated black-out blinds on rooflights.
 - Using curtains and blinds to reduce internal spill.

9.2 Commercial and Industrial

9.2.1 Many of the key points for reducing light pollution from householders apply to both commercial and industrial uses but there are also some differences. Commercial developments present some of the largest challenges to a dark landscape as owners tend to install their own lighting and assume that more is better, offering a competitive advantage. However, due to these assumptions small commercial places can – and often – install over bright and numerous sources of light pollution with little thought for dark skies or the wider landscape. Common problems include festoon lighting overbright and upward light, floodlighting over bright and badly installed, building luminance not directed and façade high level aesthetic lighting, trees up-lit, excessive clutter and up-lights above 500 lumens.

9.2.2 It is considered that applying these key points for small business lighting can still achieve intended outcomes without adversely contributing to artificial light pollution:

- Shield lights above 500 lumens;
- Use proximity sensors or timers;
- Angle lights downwards;
- Turn off at close of business;
- Avoid uncontrolled decorative lighting

9.2.3 Apply these key points for industrial lighting:

- Design scheme in accordance with best standards;
- Turn off when not needed;
- Angle lights downwards;
- Situate further away from rural locations;
- Avoid tall lighting columns in open areas

9.2.4 Figures 6 and 7 visually show how light pollution can be minimised for both commercial and industrial lighting.

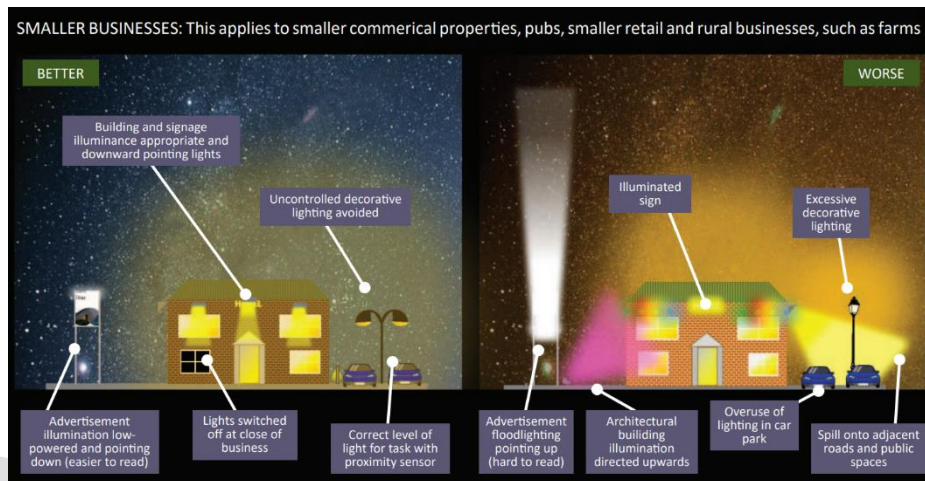


Figure 6 – Minimising light pollution from commercial lighting (from South Downs National Park Authority: Dark Skies Technical Note 2018)

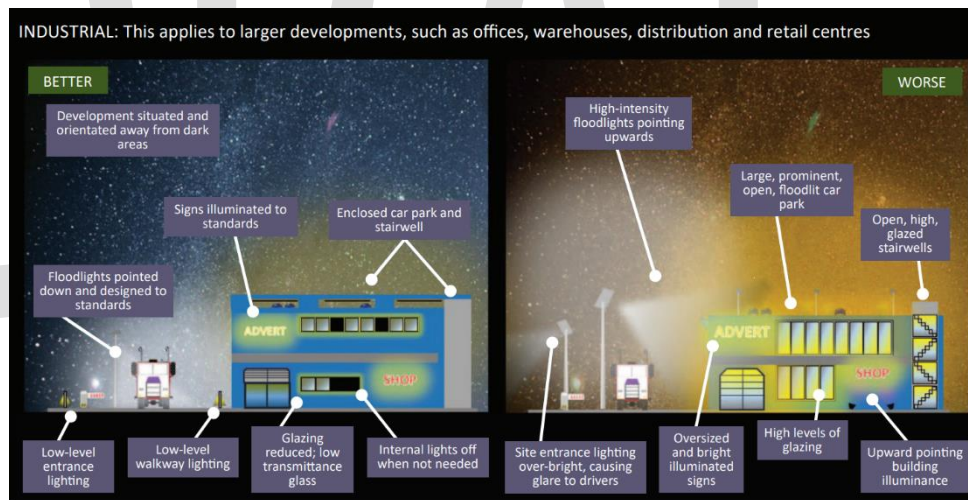


Figure 7 – Minimising light pollution from industrial lighting (from South Downs National Park Authority: Dark Skies Technical Note 2018)

9.2.5 Non-domestic lighting is different from normal domestic lighting because it tends to have a greater impact and owners may be obligated under a ‘duty of care’ or insurance needs to provide lights for other users than just themselves. It will also often be on a larger scale, use multiple light sources and be more complex. This means that they need to consider a professionally led design because they may need to achieve more precise levels of illuminance, reduce pollution and light to meet the needs of users and may need professional input from a qualified lighting designer.

9.2.6 There are also important principles to consider on non-domestic lighting and luminaires. While the advice for domestic users is still applicable to non-domestic uses, there are additional principles that should be followed:

- Upward light is zero - Under ILP GN01/23, designs should calculate the upward flux ratio which allows the effect of both direct and reflected components of the whole installation to be considered. It takes into account the contribution of the reflectance from the illuminated area and spill areas and ensures that the overall level of upward light aims to reduce the impact of sky glow.
- Asymmetric luminaires - Asymmetric luminaires are very useful in controlling lighting, particularly in all non-domestic settings. These luminaires have optics that internally bends the emitted light from the lamp and directs it to specific areas reducing waste light, for example long thin paths. Symmetric luminaires have no directing optical controls which means that the light is distributed more evenly over wider angles, usually 120 degrees. The benefit of asymmetric lights is that they can be installed flat so upward light, and spill is reduced. They can also be installed at a lower height as the light is more efficient in illuminating the right area. Many new LEDs in streetlights and floodlights have asymmetric beams to achieve more efficient illuminance standards. Asymmetric domestic lights are much harder to find as they are more general in use.
- Illuminance appropriate and visual impact - Higher levels of illuminance will be more prominent in darker landscapes and will introduce more significant levels of visual landscape impact. Regardless of the efficiency of the lighting scheme to reduce obtrusive light, the residual level of luminance (the light coming from a surface) which cannot be avoided, may still present an inappropriate visual impact. Generally, illuminance levels (light shining on a surface) of over 10 lux will begin to create a noticeable luminous landscape impact. While much depends on the size, extent and intensity of a lighting scheme, illuminance requirements over 10 lux may need to be avoided due to the inherent harm.

9.2.7 To aid the assessment of non-domestic applications with planners it is recommended that designers ensure that key information is clearly expressed in any lighting design. Equally, planners should be able to understand and access the same metrics to make an assessment.

9.2.8 Larger scale commercial lighting can have a large impact due to its scale, use and requirement, and a lighting designer is needed in nearly all cases. It is unlikely that a safe and effective design cannot be achieved without an experienced lighting designer. The range of luminaires used can be complex to meet the needs of illuminance standards for different work and public areas. Bulkhead, street, floodlight, bollards and advertisements are all typically used, all requiring a specific purpose and need. Luminaires are often

mounted at increased height (up to 15 metres) and will be more powerful to ensure illuminance levels under British Standards BS EN 12464-2 2014 Light and Lighting of workplaces, are met. The levels of illuminance can be higher than most single commercial designs and over wider areas. This means that the generated sky glow is larger and more intense, and the visual intrusion of lights can have wider landscape impacts. Large, glazed buildings and industrial complexes can generate significant internal spill, particularly if larger single elevations are used that appear as linear blocks of light in the landscape. There may also be additional impacts from increased traffic flow, particularly if the development is new. The light of headlights can create noticeable landscape impacts even though the effect is temporary.

9.2.9 Recommendations:

- In respect of commercial and industrial lighting, the Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership recommends that consideration in plan-making and decision-making should have regard to Sections 9.1 and 9.2 of this position statement and the following considerations:
 - Shield lights above 500 lumens;
 - Use proximity sensors or timers;
 - Angle lights downwards;
 - Turn off at close of business;
 - Avoid uncontrolled decorative lighting;
 - Situate further away from rural locations;
 - Avoid tall lighting columns in open areas
- Within any planning application, applicants should therefore ensure to include and make clear, in consultation with a lighting designer:
 - Justification for the lighting describing the relevant task areas
 - Lumen and Colour Temperature levels are shown.
 - Pictures of the luminaires are provided.
 - Any deviation from best practice, e.g., using heritage style lanterns on listed buildings, is given.
 - Design scheme in accordance with best standards, ensuring that upward light is zero, asymmetric luminaires and consideration of visual impacts.

9.3 Car Parking, roads and paths

9.3.1 Car parks will need lighting as they either need to provide adequate light for workers or for the public pedestrians walking to and from their vehicles. The level of illumination depends on the location of the parking and level of use.

9.3.2 If lighting is justified, small, quiet car parks in rural areas should have a recommended 5 lux-maintained average with larger car urban parks receiving 15 lux

preferably using bollard lighting rather than column mounted luminaires. Proximity sensors should be used. For illuminance levels refer to [BS EN 12464-2:2014](#). Road or path lighting may also be required which needs to comply with design requirements of road lighting, covered in [BS 5489-1-2020 – TC](#) and [BS EN 13201-2: 2015 - TC](#) – Road Lighting Performance requirements.

9.3.3 In addition to the considerations identified under the domestic, commercial and industrial lighting sections, key considerations for car parking lighting includes:

- Over lighting – glare-intense luminaires installed badly can create glare issues for users. This can be a particular issue when lights point directly towards entrances where oncoming vehicles users may suffer glare and increase the potential of harm to other users.
- Over lighting illuminance – Many non-designer led car parks tend to use lights that are over bright for the appropriate illuminance. This will increase the surface luminosity and increase the sky glow impact. Luminaire power should be appropriate for the level of illuminance (refer to Table 1).
- Asymmetric Luminaires: Upward light – As car park floodlighting typically uses higher strength luminaires, there is more availability to use asymmetric luminaires than symmetric. Asymmetric luminaires will direct the light better and avoid the potential for creating upward light.
- Bollards or poles – Low level bollards are useful as they reduce the height of luminaires and reducing the intensity. However, bollards can be susceptible to damage and they don't spread the light as effectively over larger areas than pole mounted lights. In this regard, care should be taken to use bollards in appropriate spaces, or as navigation aids around the parking area.
- Ecological and Landscape Visual Impact – Car parks can be quite large, well used and require high pole mounted luminaires, the visual impact on the landscape and ecology can be high. Although car park lighting can comply with standards, the overall presence of the lighting can produce significant residual impacts that may be difficult to overcome. Additional mitigations should include, using a CCT of 3000K and less to reduce sky glow, shielding prominent and potentially obtrusive luminaires from view and – importantly – using timers or sensors to ensure that lights are off when not needed.
- Upward Flux – ILP GN01 21 assumes that amenity lighting is not expected in the National Landscape. While this may be difficult in practice as there is a legislative driver to provide lighting for public car parks, every effort should be made to use low reflectance surfaces for new car parks to reduce the creation of sky glow and the upward flux ratio. The overall landscape impact, including the residual impact will also determine the acceptability of amenity lighting in these zones.

- Architectural Façade Lighting – The intentional illumination of building facades should be avoided, especially in rural areas where the luminance of buildings can be very prominent in the landscape. Modern alternatives such as low powered unobtrusive window lighting, should be considered.
- Walkways and bulkheads – Avoid circular or other “window” shaped bulkhead lights that emit light upward. Use bulkhead lights that direct light downwards or have shielding. Try and ensure that emergency luminaires on batteries follow these principles.

9.3.4 Recommendations:

- In respect of car parking lighting, the Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership recommends that consideration in plan-making and decision-making should have regard to Section 9.3 of this position statement and the following considerations:
 - > High usage: 20 lux, > Medium: 10 lux > Low: 5 lux
 - Over lighting – glare and illuminance;
 - Asymmetric luminaires – upward light;
 - Bollards or poles;
 - Ecological and Landscape Visual Impact; and
 - Upward Flux – Amenity Light.
- Within any planning application, applicants should therefore ensure to include and make clear, in consultation with a lighting designer:
 - Justification for the lighting describing the relevant task areas
 - Lumen and Colour Temperature levels are shown.
 - Pictures of the luminaires are provided.
 - Any deviation from best practice, e.g., using heritage style lanterns on listed buildings, is given.
 - Design scheme in accordance with best standards, ensuring that upward light is zero, asymmetric luminaries and consideration of visual impacts.

9.4 Farms

9.4.1 Farms have some permitted developments rights for lighting on existing buildings, which means that luminaires could be installed that have little consideration for design. Due to their rural location, the contrast between a dark landscape and lighting means that the visual impact can often appear relatively higher than urban settings. Principles of good lighting should be followed to avoid landscape impacts.

9.4.2 As a farm is a place of business, owners must be careful to illuminate different areas of the farm properly. According to HSE Lighting at work [HSG38](#) and British Standards [BS EN 12464-2 2014](#) *Light and Lighting of workplaces*, farmyards have two general areas of varying illuminance:

- Farm-yards: with moving vehicle, machines and people – require 20 lux average
- Equipment sheds and Animal sorting pens: with movement in hazardous area – require 50 lux average.

9.4.3 Other lighting criteria such as uniformity, glare and CRI values are also recommended in BS EN 12464-2 2014. This document provides some LED power purchasing recommendations for achieving different illuminance levels for simple applications where larger, complex and more hazardous areas may need a lighting designer.

9.4.4 Key Considerations

- Farmyard Floodlighting – Lighting of farmyards is usually achieved with area floodlights. It is important to consider asymmetric luminaires to reduce upward light and ensure glare is not an issue. Badly installed bright lights can cause glare issues where unwanted visitors and workers can become hidden – this is a safety and crime issue. They can also cause significant visual intrusion in a dark landscape which can be detrimental to wildlife and visual intrusion. Areas that are more hazardous or have more conflicted uses with people and machinery should receive greater attention. Floodlights should be installed at the lowest practical height to achieve the illumination. Use the table in Table 1 to purchase the right kind of lights for the approximate needs.
- Farm Building Roof Lights and Greenhouses – Greenhouses, open barns, poly tunnels or sheds with large amounts of glazing and roof-lights can introduce significant visual impacts. While natural light and artificial light is important to operate in all hours, internally installed luminaires should be lower than roof lights to avoid direct upward light spill. For new buildings and improvements, black out blinds should be considered to activate upon the onset of darkness. This is particularly important for greenhouses as the internal light spill can reduce sky quality for many miles. Operational open barn elevations may be more difficult to shield due to the need for natural light during the daytime. External louvres can be used in addition to turning off lights at night when they are not needed. Farm animals will also benefit from dark skies as well.
- Wildlife in the Open Countryside – The rural location of farms means that they will be surrounded by wildlife and darkness where even the smallest lights can be more visually obtrusive than urban settings. As a growing amount of evidence is showing, light pollution disrupts wildlife just as much – perhaps even more – than people. Migration routes, circadian rhythm, pollination and even agricultural efficiency can be affected by light pollution. As such it is important that lights do not unnecessarily illuminate or shine into wildlife area, waterways and the open countryside.
- Ecological and Landscape Impact Assessment – Due to the location of farms in the rural landscape, an ecological and landscape impact assessment such as the

Institution of Lighting Professionals Guidance on undertaking environmental lighting impact assessments, should be undertaken. The contrast between light and dark, particularly in more remote rural farms, means that the impact of lighting is magnified compared with other higher ambient lighting areas. For more remote farms away from the urban fringe, consideration to the wider environment should be made and should include an assessment of the impact through ecological receptors and the view from the surrounding landscape. More consideration of the illumination levels, hours of use and intensity should be considered.

- Lighting for Security – Security is undoubtedly an important consideration for a farm. The document ‘Secured By Design – Lighting Guide’ by the Police gives general advice for security lighting. However, such lighting should be considered carefully and complemented by supplementary systems, e.g., smart alarms. Any lighting should still be of the right brightness, colour to avoid upward light spill.
- Other Considerations – Farms may also require lighting for car parks, roads, advertisements, small business premises or sports (menage) lighting. Other good and bad practices chapter should be referenced when considering these lighting schemes. Likely references will include small commercial lighting, parking and roads/paths.

9.4.5 Luminaire Advice

- Area Floodlights – Avoid symmetrical halogen security lights with high colour temperatures and a fixed PIR Sensor. Use tiltable warm white LED lights with a separate PIR sensor. You can position the PIR sensor to trigger for people not wildlife.
- Temporary Floodlights – Lights on mobile generators which can be erected for temporary needs should follow good practice. Care should be made to ensure that the lights are pointing downward, and the minimum amount of light is used to perform the task. Temporary lights can be capable of producing very high brightness to cover many different tasks. Try and use as few individual lamps as possible.

9.4.6 Recommendations:

- In respect of farm lighting, the Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership recommends that consideration in plan-making and decision-making should have regard to Section 9.4 of this position statement and the following considerations:
 - Farm-yards: with moving vehicle, machines and people – require 20 lux average
 - Equipment sheds and Animal sorting pens: with movement in hazardous area – require 50 lux average.
 - Over lighting – glare and illuminance;
 - Asymmetric luminaires – upward light;
 - Farm building rooflights and greenhouses;
 - Ecological and Landscape Visual Impact;

- Lighting for security; and
- Upward Flux – Amenity Light.
- Within any planning application, applicants should therefore ensure to include and make clear, in consultation with a lighting designer:
 - Justification for the lighting describing the relevant task areas
 - Lumen and Colour Temperature levels are shown.
 - Pictures of the luminaires are provided.
 - Any deviation from best practice, e.g. area and temporary floodlight luminaire advice, is given.
 - Design scheme in accordance with best standards, ensuring that upward light is zero, asymmetric luminaires and consideration of visual impacts.

9.5 Sports

9.5.1 Amenity floodlighting, particularly at sports pitches, is one of the biggest threats to dark skies. Sports lighting has a very high impact in dark sky places and a lighting designer is needed. These developments often reduce sky quality and can be seen for miles in the surrounding landscape. This is due to the high illuminance and colour needs to enable users to play safely. Luminaires are often installed at high levels to ensure correct illuminance even with asymmetric lights, which means the lamps can be very bright and visible. As such, the lowest practical mounting height should be used in achieving the designed illuminance. Different sports require different levels of illuminance and colour depending on the skill level, intensity and ability to see play. Community level sports such as football tennis and hockey, will require illuminance levels of 300 lux with appropriate uniformity of around 0.7. Lighting requirements can be found in the [Sports England Artificial Lighting Guide 2012](#).

9.5.2 Horse arenas and equestrian menages can have a significant impact on the dark rural landscape. The illuminances needed can range from 100 to 500 lux (BS EN 12193) and would be very prominent even if low reflectance material is used. A lighting designer should again be used to ensure that luminaires are installed correctly, and suitable curfews used. Luminaires should not be erected 'ad-hoc' on existing structures as they will probably not achieve appropriate illuminances and limit obtrusive light. Using trees as fixing points should also be avoided. Temporary lighting should not be used as the luminaires are general in purpose and will not be appropriate for this type of activity.

9.5.3 Further key considerations in respect of sports and arena lighting include:

- Nuisance – Sports lighting near residential areas can cause nuisance due to the intensity and glare. It is important that light obtrusion is avoided. Designs should

reference ILP GN01 (2021) 'The reduction of obtrusive light' which recommends levels of intrusion into windows and boundaries.

- Sky Glow: Asymmetric Sports Lights – High powered symmetric lights can cause significant sky glow, particularly if the main beam points to the middle of the playing surface. Modern asymmetric LEDs should be used to direct light more efficiently without causing upward light. They are designed to be installed flat and at the correct lowest height to reduce intensity and upward light.
- Colour in Sports Lighting – Sports illuminance needs a high level of colour rendition (CRI) to allow players to sight the play properly and pick a ball out from the background. This means that higher colour temperature LED (5000K+) are often used to achieve higher colour rendition which exacerbates the impact of skyglow as the light penetrates further into the atmosphere. This effect can be avoided. Modern LEDs have much better range of colour rendition with lower colour temperatures which is stated on the product spec. Colour rendition index levels of 60 are normally required for most community levels of play. The spectral range should also be checked to avoid blue colours with higher colour temperature needs.
- Landscape Visual Impact on Special Qualities – Due to the higher levels of illuminance, sports pitches can have a significant impact on the National Landscape and the Special Qualities even if the design of the lights is compliant with standards. For example, a pitch may have compliant lighting in terms of illuminance, colour rendition and colour temperature but due to the light presence of the illuminated surface, it can create a significant visual landscape impact. The residual impact could be of such significance that it may present a threat to dark skies and may need to be reconsidered or avoided.
- Upward Flux – ILP GN 01/21 assumes that sports lighting is not expected in National Landscapes such as the Wye Valley. While this may be difficult in practice, every effort should be made to use low reflectance surfaces to reduce the creation of sky glow and the upward flux ratio. The overall landscape impact, including the residual impact will also determine the acceptability of sports lighting in these zones. In this respect, it is always preferable to site sports lighting in urban areas where it is accessible and has a much reduced impact due to the high ambient lighting level.

9.5.4 Recommendations:

- In respect of sports lighting, the Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership recommends that consideration in plan-making and decision-making should have regard to Section 9.5 of this position statement and the following considerations:
 - Over lighting – glare and illuminance;
 - Nuisance;
 - Sky Glow;
 - Asymmetric luminaires – upward light;

- Ecological and Landscape Visual Impact, particularly on Special Qualities;
- Colour;
- Colour Temperature; and
- Upward Flux – Amenity Light.
- Within any planning application, applicants should therefore ensure to include and make clear, in consultation with a lighting designer:
 - Justification for the lighting describing the relevant task areas
 - Lumen and Colour Temperature levels are shown.
 - Pictures of the luminaires are provided.
 - Any deviation from best practice, is given.
- Design scheme in accordance with best standards, ensuring that upward light is zero, asymmetric luminaires, smart switches, and consideration of visual impacts.

9.6 Illuminated advertisements

9.6.1 Although advertising is subject to regulations steps should be taken to illuminate signs only when needed, using low powered downward lights, such as LED strips. Illuminated advertisements are discouraged in all areas of the Wye Valley National Landscape. If you wish to install an illuminated advertisement, it is likely to need advertisement consent and possibly Listed Building Consent (if property is listed).

9.6.2 If the local planning authority considers the advertisement necessary, then it should: be no higher than the property; not face towards areas of darkness; use lights that point down; use low-powered lights; and be switched off at the close of business.

9.6.3 Where an advertisement sign does not need illuminating, the local planning authority may make this a condition of the consent, so that lighting cannot be added later on. The luminance of lights is addressed in [ILP PLG 05: The Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements](#).

9.6.4 Recommendations:

- The Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership does not recommend illuminated advertisements be installed in the National Landscape where possible.
- If a local planning authority considers an advertisement necessary, then it should:
 - All illuminated advertisements installed on properties should be switched off on close of business.
 - Any installations on properties should not exceed the height of the property.
 - Any peripheral sites with installations should not face towards areas of darkness or lower environmental zones.
 - Up lighters should not be used.

- Where advertisement consents are granted that do not need illumination, the Partnership recommends that decision-makers make this a condition of any such consent.

9.7 Temporary Lighting

9.7.1 Temporary lighting impacts should be part of the core planning for any project. Apply good lighting principles and practice to minimise the light pollution and potential nuisance to others:

- Ensure that the power and installation of the equipment are appropriate for the task.
- Use lights with 3000 K or less.
- Switch off the lighting when not in use.
- Avoid temporary lighting in the winter when the impact is greatest due to the longer, darker nights, and the lack of vegetation acting as a barrier.
- Avoid using sources of light that penetrate deep into the sky, such as scanners or lasers.
- Where possible, use existing lit access routes to reduce the need for additional lighting.
- Keep light festivals to urban areas where there is already a high level of sky glow.

9.7.2 Other key considerations in respect of temporary lighting:

- Illuminance levels – The illuminance of areas should be appropriate for the task with reference to British Standards BS EN 12464- 2 lighting of outdoor workplaces. Care should be taken to ensure that the minimum amount of light is provided to workers, but it is not over illuminated. The choice of LEDs power should reflect this.
- Upward Light – All lights should be pointing downwards to avoid the generation of sky glow. Fixtures that cannot be adjusted downwards should be avoided.
- Colour Temperature – High colour temperatures above 3000K should be avoided. LED with 3000K should have sufficient CRI to achieve lighting requirements for CCTV.
- Security and night lights – While the need to provide sufficient light for security through the night is appreciated, care should be taken to ensure that any security lights are on suitable timers and sensors to trigger on the detection of movement. Construction tasks lights should be off at close of work leaving only essential security lighting that should comply with lighting requirements on upward light and colour temperature. Using a lighting designer. As a construction site is a place of work, there needs to be an appropriate level of illuminance that meets working standards for health and safety. It is recommended that a lighting designer be consulted to produce an appropriate lighting plan that achieves illuminance levels but does not necessarily pollute the sky.

The construction lighting should be considered within a landscape and visual impact assessment(LVIA) and within the lighting plans luminaire details.

9.7.3 Recommendations:

- In respect of temporary lighting, the Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership recommends that consideration in plan-making and decision-making should have regard to Section 9.7 of this position statement and the following considerations:
 - Over lighting – glare and illuminance;
 - Illuminance levels;
 - Asymmetric luminaires – upward light;
 - Ecological and Landscape Visual Impact, particularly on Special Qualities;
 - Colour Temperature of 3000k or less; and
 - Security and night lights.
- Design scheme in accordance with best standards, ensuring that upward light is zero, asymmetric luminaires, smart switches, and consideration of visual impacts.

9.8 Street Lighting

9.8.1 The illumination of residential roads is generally the responsibility of the Local Lighting Authority (usually the county Council) or the Highways Agency for larger roads. Lighting that is in the public domain has been receiving close attention in recent years.

9.8.2 New developments that require street lighting of roads should comply with the Local Lighting Authority's design guidance adopted by the authority for ongoing maintenance. The installation of street lighting for roads is not a legal requirement – you don't have to provide lighting unless there is a clear safety need. However, if lighting is installed, there is a legal responsibility for the owners to maintain it according to British Standards. As such a lighting designer should be consulted.

9.8.3 The design requirements of road lighting is covered in [BS 5489-1-2020](#): Design of road lighting and [BS EN 13201-2:2015](#) – Road Lighting Performance requirements. Lighting of roads and public amenity areas - Code of practice. The illuminance of roads depends on the traffic use and the mix of pedestrian needs, (road class). Both standards should be used to determine road class.

9.8.4 Key considerations in respect of street lighting include:

- Justification – Streetlights are a key determinant of sky quality, so it is important that there a clear and essential need for the lights. Adding streetlights is often an 'expectation' but this should be assessed for actual need. The need for lighting could be avoided with effective consideration at the initial development design phase.

- **Low Mounting Height: Bollards** – For quiet residential access roads or pathways low bollards could be used instead of higher column mounted streetlights. Bollards will help reduce the source intensity and visibility while keeping illuminance levels. Spill can also be limited using asymmetric optics. Bollards also reduce the generation of sky glow as the lamp is relatively less bright than pole mounted lights. Bollards should be used in areas where the risk of vehicular damage or vandalism is low. The Secured by Design guides provide more information for more urban areas.
- **Illuminance Curfews** – Modern LEDs can be dimmed down to achieve different levels of illuminance. As roads and paths will have a mixed level of use-age throughout the night, it is recommended that LEDs be dimmed to different road classes that reflect the changing use. Lights can also be subject to a part-night lighting regime where some lights are switched off when usage is very low. A consultation is often needed to achieve this, but it will reduce the nighttime impact and save money. Curfews are particularly effective in rural parts of the landscapes.
- **Colour Correlated Temperature** – Some LEDs will have high colour temperature and a blue-white spectrum. They should be avoided as they contribute to the sky glow effect. The British Standards refer only to Colour Rendition levels (CRI) rather than colour temperature, as colour rendition can be achieved with different levels of colour temperature. In this respect it is recommended that colour temperatures of 3000K and 2700K, with low blue-light should be used in achieving British Standard CRI levels.
- **Low Reflectance surfaces** – Different road and path materials reflect light different. To reduce the indirect scatter of lights, Low reflectance road and path surfaces should be used to reduce the light scattering into the atmosphere. Black and dark grey asphalt has a much lower reflectance compared to grey cement concrete.
- **Lighting for Wildlife Corridors** – In some places, road lighting may need to be installed close to highly sensitive wildlife routes, where priority species, such as bats, may be disrupted by lighting. Following examples from other places in the UK, such as Worcestershire, red luminaires could be used in these places.
- **Upward Flux** – ILP GN01/21 assumes that road lighting is not expected in the Wye Valley National Landscape. While this is difficult in practice, accounting for the strategic position of the Wye Valley in proximity to towns and cities, every effort should be made to use low reflectance surfaces to reduce the creation of sky glow and the upward flux ratio. The overall landscape impact, including the residual impact will also determine the acceptability of road lighting in these zones.

9.8.5 It is not always necessary to have street lighting on a development. Where larger developments require street lighting, it can be designed to minimise light pollution, including features like dimming or part-night schemes. In some situations, the use of full cut-off, low-level bollards may be more appropriate than tall, brighter columns. This will limit the total lumen output and possible glare, scattering and reduce the impact of lighting

on the surrounding area. The ILP Guidance Note 1 for the reduction of obtrusive light references British Standards on road lighting.

9.8.6 The ever-increasing cost of electricity has caused councils to reconsider keeping inefficient street lights on all night, and many are now turning them off. As a result, large amounts of money have been saved, and councils' CO2 footprints have been reduced. Trials have shown that energy-saving dimming (to over 30 per cent) is hardly noticed by residents²⁰. Concerns are often expressed that turning off street lights could lead to an increase in crime. However, a study published in the Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health in 2015 found little evidence of harmful effects of switch-off, partnight lighting, dimming or reducing the colour temperature (kelvin) on road collisions or crime in England and Wales²¹

9.8.7 Dimming or switching off street lights via remote control is becoming a more widespread practice. Technology also enables lighting to be off or dimmed until movement is registered and the brighter light needed. Therefore, try to use fully cut-off, energy-efficient street lighting to minimise energy usage, and significantly reduce light pollution, nuisance to neighbours and harm to wildlife. Low-energy LED lights should be 3000 K or below (warm white) to prevent any adverse effects on animals and humans. Worcestershire County Council have recently installed bat-friendly, red streetlights along a 60 metre stretch of the A4440, near to Warndon Wood. The road is a flight path for bats and white street lights disrupt their feeding, especially the rarer, slower-flying species. Yet, red lights are proving to have little or no adverse impact on them.

9.8.8 Recommendations:

- In respect of street lighting, the Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership recommends that consideration in plan-making and decision-making should have regard to Section 9.8 of this position statement and the following considerations:
 - The installation of street lighting for roads not a legal requirement and should only be installed unless there is a clear safety need. However, if lighting is installed, there is a legal responsibility for the owners to maintain it according to British Standards.
 - Potential use of low mounting height bollards in preference to tall columns.
 - Illuminance Curfews and dimming/switching off street lights.
 - Colour Correlated Temperature of 3000K and 2700K, with low blue-light should be used in achieving British Standard CRI levels.
 - Low Reflectance surfaces – black and dark grey asphalt has a much lower reflectance compared to grey cement concrete.

²⁰ https://britastro.org/dark-skies/pdfs/CfDS1703_E5_Good_Lighting_Guide.pdf

²¹ <https://jech.bmj.com/content/69/11/1118>

- Lighting for Wildlife Corridors – where road lighting may need to be installed close to highly sensitive wildlife routes, where priority species, such as bats, may be disrupted by lighting.
- Upward Flux.

10. WYE VALLEY NATIONAL LANDSCAPE AMBIENT LIGHTING ZONES

10.1 Light Control Zones

10.1.1 While all the principles of Section 9 should be adhered to, appropriate lighting will differ according to the surroundings and setting of the lighting scheme. The Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP) recommends using ‘light control zones’ to determine the appropriateness of proposed lighting schemes within different surroundings. ILP guidance sets out zones and the limitations of light parameters for each zone.

10.1.2 The standard practice in external lighting design is to apply ambient lighting environment zones (E-zones) to set different lighting requirements under different sky conditions. Due to the difference in ambient lighting between urban and rural settings, different levels of obtrusive light are allowed although zero upward light is preferred in all zones. The Institution of Lighting Professionals guidance on the reduction of obtrusive light (GN01 ILP: 2021) recommends lighting specifications based on these ambient zones. They state different levels of upward light, intensity, glare and building luminance for these zones which should be followed in any lighting design.

10.1.3 ILP Guidance Note 1 for the reduction of obtrusive light²² recommends the following light control zones in Table 2 below. The National Landscape will either be a rural zone incorporating E0/E1 or an urban zone E3 with an additional caveat on upward light.

Table 2 – ILP Light Control Zones

Zone	Surrounding	Lighting Environment	Examples	Sky Quality
E0	Protected	Dark	Designated Dark Sky Reserves and astronomical observable dark skies	20.5+ (*)
E1	Natural	Dark	Rural areas, National Landscapes (AONBs) and National Parks	20 to 20.5 (*)
E2	Rural	Low district brightness	Rural settlements or relatively dark outer suburban locations	15 to 20

²² [Resources | Institution of Lighting Professionals \(theilp.org.uk\)](https://www.theilp.org.uk/resources)

E3	Suburban	Medium district brightness	Small town centres/suburban locations	<15
E4	Urban	High district brightness	Town centres with high levels of night-time activity	<15

(*) - This table references ILP GN01 2021 and the sky quality relating to ambient lighting zones. To be consistent with IDA places minimum sky quality for Parks and Places (2018 guidelines), a lower value of 21.2 is required. ILP GN01 2021 has a lower limit of 20.5 reflecting earlier IDA guidelines.

10.1.4 Refer to the ILP guidance note to see tables with the recommended limitations or maximum values of light parameters in each zone for:

- The illumination on surrounding properties
- Brightness of luminaires (light fittings)
- The effects on transport systems
- Sky glow
- The effect of over-lit building façades and signs
- Upward light ratio (ULR) of luminaires

10.1.5 By identifying ambient lighting zones, this will aim to help:

- Prevent unnecessary artificial light pollution from surrounding towns in the setting of the National Landscape encroaching on and from within the National Landscape.
- Minimise artificial light pollution from rural settlements, economic hubs and infrastructure within the National Landscape.
- Reduce existing light pollution from all sources within the National Landscape, through:
 - removal of lighting where possible;
 - reduction of lighting (e.g. of intensity or duration, using sensors and timers where practical); and
 - improvement of lighting (e.g. better designed and installed luminaires and warmer lights).

10.1.6 Based on Table 2, the Wye Valley National Landscape can be categorised into two main rural and urban zones based upon the use of Council and Authority owned road street lighting. Street lighting has a clear and measurable impact on sky quality and is a useful demarcation between ambient lighting environments. The environment zones are set as follows:

- A rural zone which includes areas of the National Landscape that has sky quality measurements satisfying.

- E0 – Rural landscape, open countryside, very little lighting, isolated buildings
- E1 – Rural landscape, small villages, very little street lighting
- An urban zone to include,
 - E3 – Urban/Suburban settlements, towns, villages using street lighting.

10.1.7 For all lighting development within the rural setting (not within urban areas using Local Authority streetlighting) it is expected that plans will aim to achieve E0 compliance under ILP GN01 2021 as a matter of principle. Use of E1 criteria instead of E0 should be clear in the design justification.

10.1.8 The need for E0 compliance is particularly relevant to road, amenity, and sports lighting where residual effects are likely to cause significant adverse landscape impacts. E1 areas are expected to reside between the urban fringe boundaries and the darker rural setting. The E0 zone and 20.5+ measurements are likely to begin within 2km of the edge of the street-lit urban fringe (E3) boundary. If in doubt, you should consult with the Wye Valley National Landscape Team to determine zone compliance requirements.

10.1.9 In all zones, an installed upward light level of ZERO is sought in all cases, irrespective of ambient lighting zone. This is in contrast to the ILP GN 01 guidance which allows positive values of ULR in E3/4. The Wye Valley National Landscape seeks zero upward lighting in all cases and supersedes the ILP guidance in this technical respect.

10.2 The Setting of the Wye Valley National Landscape

10.2.1 The setting of the National Landscape is not formally defined²³. When dealing with such areas, consideration should be given to the impact any lighting will have on the National Landscape itself. Proposals for changes in the setting should consider the relationship of the setting with the protected landscape of the National Landscape, its landscape character and its special qualities. The setting of the National Landscape does not have a delineated geographical boundary. It is defined by the area surrounding the National Landscape where proposed development could negatively impact on the natural beauty and special qualities. With regards to lighting, the impact on the National Landscape will vary in each case but will particularly depend on the topography of the area (a light on top of a hill will be seen from much further away than one in a valley), and the design and use of the lighting.

10.3 Recommendations:

- The Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership supports The Institution of Lighting Professionals 'light control zones' guide namely ambient lighting environment zones

²³ Further guidance on the 'Setting' of the Wye Valley National Landscape can be found within the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan 2021-2026.

(E-zones) to determine the appropriateness of proposed lighting schemes within different surroundings to inform lighting specifications based on these ambient zones for lighting assessments to support planning applications.

- Upward Light Ratio (ULR) in all zones an installed upward light level of ZERO is sought in all cases, irrespective of ambient lighting zone. This is in contrast to the ILP GN 01 guidance which allows positive values of ULR in E3/4. The Wye Valley National Landscape seeks zero upward lighting in all cases and supersedes the ILP guidance in this technical respect.
- Lighting proposals in the setting of the Wye Valley National Landscape should consider the relationship of the setting with the protected landscape of the National Landscape, its landscape character and its special qualities. T3 accord with this aim, no external lights should be erected or installed in, or within the setting of, the AONB unless:
 - They can be shown to be essential for security or safety, and the minimum necessary to achieve it;
 - They are directed downwards and designed or shielded to prevent upward, sideways, and outward spillage;
 - They give a light whose colour and intensity are appropriate for the wider setting and for wildlife;
 - They do not highlight a structure or feature that would have an adverse visual impact on the surrounding landscape; and
 - They utilise the most energy- and pollution-efficient equipment that is reasonably available.
- In order to meet these aims where existing lighting is identified as having an adverse effect on the character of the National Landscape, the Partnership would encourage the removal or modification of the lighting units.
- Plan-makers and decision-makers should address tranquillity to ensure development, either individually or cumulatively, does not degrade the tranquillity of the National Landscape. Local plans should require developments in the National Landscape to be designed to prevent impacts of light pollution from artificial light on intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation interests. Decision-takers should ensure that development either individually, collectively and cumulatively, does not degrade the tranquillity of the National Landscape.

11.0 HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

11.1 The historical use of a landscape will have shaped its fields, woods, tracks, lanes, villages and hamlets, defining its present day character. It is important to consider both the impact of light pollution and the design of light fittings on this historic landscape character, as well as on Listed Buildings, Registered Parks and Gardens, and other sites

of historical interest. Conservation Areas are designated for their special architectural or historic interest and are given a broader protection than Listed Buildings. Conservation Area designation requires planning decisions to address the quality of the landscape in its broadest sense, including protection from light pollution.

12.0 DARK SKY STATUSES

12.1 The International Dark Skies Association (IDA) is the recognised authority globally for night sky protection and is dedicated to protecting the night skies for present and future generations. The IDA is a not-for-profit organisation funded by membership, grants, sponsorship and income from events and sales. There are three international Dark Sky Place designations; Dark Sky Sanctuary, Dark Sky Park and Dark Sky Reserve. Designation is by the IDA following a rigorous application process supported by survey evidence, a lighting inventory and a Lighting Management Plan. There is growing interest in Dark Sky Place designation in the UK with several Dark Skies Parks and Dark Skies Reserves and further applications currently being prepared.

12.2 The IDA defines an International Dark Sky Reserve as “*a public or private land possessing an exceptional or distinguished quality of starry nights and nocturnal environment.*” It awards areas Dark Sky status based on their scientific, natural, educational, cultural or heritage value, and/or their value to public enjoyment. It is an area that is recognised as having exceptionally high quality starry nights and a nocturnal environment that is protected for its scientific, natural and cultural heritage as well as public enjoyment.

12.3 Achieving such statuses consist of a core area meeting minimum criteria for sky quality and natural darkness, and a peripheral area that supports dark-sky preservation in the core. They set higher standards and planning requirements for preventing light pollution and place a ‘duty of regard’ on everyone to protect them. The IDA also awards other types of Dark Sky Place designations, such as Dark Sky Community/Town; see their website for more information. Currently, there are no Dark Sky Reserves in the Wye Valley National Landscape, but there are Reserves nearby in Cranborne Chase National Landscape and Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority.

12.4 To achieve a consistent approach to managing dark skies across the Wye Valley National Landscape, it is desirable that recognised standards should be applied. In the longer term these could be defined in an area specific dark skies management plan (e.g. as part of the requirements for a possible future Dark Skies Reserve). For current purposes, the widely respected sets of standards developed by the Institute of Lighting Professionals and Commission for Dark Skies should be used.

12.5 The aspiration for the Wye Valley National Landscape to achieve International Dark Sky Status could be considered.

12.5 Recommendation:

- The Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership should aspire for the Wye Valley National Landscape to achieve International Dark Sky Status by way of becoming a Dark Sky Sanctuary, Dark Sky Park and/or Dark Sky Reserve.

13.0 LIGHTING POLICY FOR LPAS

13.1 Justification for a Lighting Policy

13.1.1 This position statement can be used to develop policy for a Local Plan. There is a potential mismatch between the proactive policies to cut light pollution and enhance dark skies at national level, and more cautious policies to control unnecessary light intrusion at local level, which allow, but do not promote proactive management to enhance dark skies. It is clear that local planning and highways authorities and other decision-makers are actively aware of and interested in pro-active management of dark skies, but in the absence of proactive co-ordination of effort it has proved difficult to do much more than control new light pollution on a case-by-case basis.

13.1.2 Light in itself is not a pollutant. It is only when it is obtrusive, finding its way into areas not intended to be lit, that it starts to have an adverse and unreasonable impact.

13.1.3 All relevant authorities down to parish council level have a duty to consider the AONB designation in any land use/environment decisions (Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000).

13.1.4 Local planning authorities have a responsibility to support the protection of human health, nocturnal wildlife habitats, public enjoyment of the night sky and its heritage, and/or areas ideal for professional and amateur astronomy. Local planning authorities should have a lighting policy with the aim of preventing or minimising light pollution to the area.

13.1.5 Suggested wording for a Lighting Policy and conditions in support of a Lighting Policy is identified in recommendation 13.1.6. When determining planning applications, the LPA may seek to minimise light pollution through planning 'conditions', such as limiting the hours of illumination. Planning authorities should also be aware that giving permission for certain uses, such as sports facilities, community halls, or the reuse of farm buildings, can give rise to lighting demands later on. It is important to note that a planning authority cannot influence existing lighting unless there is a planning variation and they can add a condition, especially if policy has changed since the original lights were installed. Planning conditions can help ensure policy is adhered to, good lighting design is used, and light pollution is minimised from a lighting scheme on a new development or when there is a planning variation to an existing scheme. The need to apply conditions

and the precise wording will depend on the proposed development, such as location and intended use.

13.1.6 Recommendation:

The Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership supports the following suggested wording for a Lighting Policy to be incorporated into future Local Plans and planning application decision-making.

Light Pollution and Promoting Dark Skies

"Proposals for lighting schemes will be permitted where it is demonstrated that the development could not proceed without lighting, and the scheme is appropriate to its surroundings by ensuring, as a minimum:

- *it is the minimum necessary for its intended purpose;*
- *the measured and observed sky quality in the surrounding area is not reduced;*
- *lighting is not unnecessarily visible in nearby designated and key habitats;*
- *the visibility of lighting from surrounding landscape is avoided;*
- *building design avoids increased light spill from internal lighting;*
- *it will have no significant adverse effects (individually or cumulatively) to the character of the area, the safety of vehicle users and pedestrians, the amenity of local residents, or the diurnal/seasonal rhythms of the biodiversity, and;*
- *any adverse impacts that cannot be avoided are mitigate with suitable measures.*

The correlated colour temperature (CCT) of outdoor lighting (including street lighting) should not exceed 2700 Kelvins in order to limit the effects of known environmental hazards associated with short-wavelength visible light.

Proposals where external lighting is required should include a full lighting scheme that provides information about its purpose, hours of use, layout and beam orientation, and a schedule of the light equipment proposed including luminaire type, mounting height, aiming angles and lumen unit levels.

Schemes must meet or exceed the level of protection appropriate to the environmental light control zones of the Wye Valley National Landscape in which an application is proposed. Specifications for the zones are contained in the Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP) GN01 Guidance note for the reduction of obtrusive light."

Suggested conditions in support of a Lighting Policy

"No building or use hereby permitted shall be occupied or use commenced until a report detailing the lighting scheme and predicted light levels has been submitted to, and been

approved in writing, by the local planning authority. Artificial lighting to the development must conform to requirements to meet the obtrusive light limitations for exterior lighting installations for environmental zones – E0/E1/E2 [delete as appropriate] and the ILP GN01 Guidance note for the reduction of obtrusive light. Reason: In order to preserve the special qualities of the Wye Valley National Landscape including dark skies and tranquillity.

No external lighting shall be installed on site unless details of such lighting, including the intensity of illumination and predicted lighting contours [insert extra requirements], have been first submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority prior to first occupation/use of the site. Any external lighting that is installed shall accord with the details so approved. Reason: In order to preserve the special qualities of the Wye Valley National Landscape including dark skies and tranquillity.

No development shall take place until a Construction Environmental Management Plan has been submitted to, and been approved in writing, by the local planning authority. The plan must demonstrate the adoption and use of the best practicable means to reduce the effects of noise, vibration, dust and site lighting. Reason: In order to minimise light pollution and other disturbance to people and wildlife during the construction.”

Other suggested conditions might include:

- *“Not permitting any form of external lighting. Especially appropriate to developments in environmental light control zone E0 areas.*
- *Specifying the hours of illumination.*
- *Requiring non-domestic facilities to install electronically controlled blackout blinds that operate automatically to prevent internal light spilling outside at night.*
- *Specifying the height and/or number of lighting columns.”*

14.0 EXTERNAL LIGHTING DESIGNERS

14.1 A lighting designer is not normally needed for most minor and single use external lights for homes or small businesses. The domestic lighting advice should be sufficient to follow in these cases. A qualified lighting designer is generally needed when lighting needs are complex, and where it is essential to meet a specified level of illuminance. Designers will ensure that the luminaires achieve all the necessary requirements to satisfy both lighting needs and dark sky compliance. Larger scale sports, commercial, industrial, road lighting or public realm lighting should employ the services of a competent lighting designer.

14.2 A lighting designer should:

- Undertake an environmental lighting impact assessment that covers the lighting needs within its setting, and any residual impacts on the landscape. It should identify the quality of dark skies over the development, the ambient lighting level (E-zone) and any sensitive receptors that surround it.
- Produce a lighting plan and luminaire schedule that clearly shows how the lighting complies with relevant guidance's and standards, such as British Standards for roads or workplaces or Sports England guidance for sports lighting.
- Show that key obtrusive lighting metrics comply with the Institution of Lighting Guidance on the reduction of Obtrusive light GN01-21²⁴ for the location. Care should be taken to clearly show planners who should then be able to assess key dark sky metrics that include:
 - Upward Light Ratio of luminaires and the overall scheme. It should be zero.
 - Colour Temperature (K). It should be less than or equal to 3000 kelvins, although bat advice (GN/23) states colour temperature should be ideally 2700 kelvins.
 - Task Illuminance (Lux). It should meet the relevant illuminance standards.
 - Light Spill and intensity on human and natural receptors.
 - Building Luminance.
- Show any mitigations that have been used to reduce the impact. This would include proximity controls, reduced illuminance levels throughout the night or additional shielding.

14.3 You may also wish to refer to the [ILP Guidance Note 9 on 'Domestic Exterior Lighting: Getting it right \(GN 09/19\)](#). [ILP](#) consultant register, SLL or LIA, is generally needed when lighting needs are more complex, and where there is a need to achieve a specified level of illuminance. Designers will ensure that the luminaires achieve all the necessary requirements to satisfy both lighting needs and dark sky compliance. Larger scale sports, commercial, industrial, road lighting or public realm lighting should employ the services of a competent lighting designer. It is noted that occasionally, it may be necessary to carry out a separate technical assessment of the effects of lighting on both landscape character and views/visual amenity. In which case, a qualified landscape architect with experience in the subject should be engaged to work in close collaboration with the lighting designer/effects assessor. This is in accordance with the 3rd Edition Guidelines on Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3)²⁵ - see paragraph 6.12 of GLVIA3.

14.4 It is recommended that lighting installations that are close to or within key receptor sites consult with specialist ecologists, where appropriate, to ensure that biodiversity

²⁴ [Guidance Note 1 for the reduction of obtrusive light 2021 | Institution of Lighting Professionals \(theilp.org.uk\)](#)

²⁵ See Paragraph 6.12 of GLVIA3

concerns are integrated into the design. Ecological Constraints and Opportunity Plans (ECOP)’s should be created to identify key and supporting species and priority habitats.

15.0 LIGHTING PURCHASING RECOMMENDATIONS

15.1 Minor lamps: brightness and approximate power

15.1.1 This table below provides the power wattages for different types of bulb brightness that you will find in most retailers. Some are being phased out, but you may still have some in the cupboard that you might want to use. For most minor domestic purposes, 500 lumens are normally more than enough. For lamps greater than 500 lumens, you should use shielding or luminaires that direct all the light downward.

BULB BRIGHTNESS (lumens)	220+	400+		700+	900+	1300+
Incandescent	25W	40W		60W	75W	100W
Halogen	18W	28W		42W	53W	70W
CFL	6W	9W		12W	15W	20W
LED	4W	6W		10W	14W	18W
LED GU10	3W	5W		8W	10W	12W

16.0 USING VISIBLE LIGHT TRANSMISSION (VLT)

16.1 Not all glass is the same. Depending on the internal space requirements, glazing will use different methods to control the transmission of visible light through the glass. This ‘VLT’ value of glass can be selected to minimise glazing impact while providing sufficient visible light for the purpose. (Tints provide a similar function). From a distance in a dark landscape, the impact from glazing spill can be similar to light emitted from an appropriately designed illuminated advertisement. Glazing should aim to meet the ‘target VLT’ for typical glazing types shown below, especially in remote dark landscapes.

16.2 Visible Light Transmission (VLT) is a ratio/percentage that indicates the proportion of light passing through. It is usually expressed as a number between 0 and 1, where the higher the value, the more light passes through. The lower the number the less internal spill.

16.3 Glazing manufacturers provide a range of VLT and tint options for a variety of needs. The recommendations above have been cross-referenced against retail options for their intended purposes to ensure optimal function.

16.4 All glazing has a potential landscape impact either by disrupting the dark landscape with point sources, or through the spill of light into the air. Generally, smaller glazing with lower internal illuminance levels will disrupt the landscape less and have a low impact. Larger glazed elevations with brighter internal illuminance will stand out more and pollute more.

16.5 Black out blinds should be used where the lowest VLT targets are not available or practical. This will be more relevant to larger and more commercial uses of glazing where other considerations such as natural daylight or heating is important. The table below helps to identify VLT targets for several glazing types.

Glazing Type	Potential Landscape Impact	Target VLT
Normal Domestic Glazing	Low impact	~0.65
Large, continuous open domestic glazing	Medium impact	0.4 to 0.65
Domestic roof lights, conservatories and lanterns	Medium impact	0.4 to 0.5
Commercial sky lights	High Impact	~0.3
Small office and shop fronts	Low Impact	~0.65
Structural glazing	Very high impact	~0.4

Notes: For practical considerations of product options, the acceptable target and range is the **target VLT +/- 0.05**. The landscape impact of glazing will also depend upon the urban or rural setting which should be taken into account.

17.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

17.1 In addition to the 'footnotes' provided throughout, this Position Statement is supported by several appendices (as a separate document), which provide:

- Example Lighting Assessment (Appendix 1).
- Planning Officer checklist (Appendix 2).

- Publicly available evidence base provided by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) for Wales only (Appendix 3).
- Links to other useful websites:
 - The Commission for Dark Skies provides information and advice on light pollution and how to minimise it.
 - The International Dark-Sky Association works to protect the night skies for present and future generations. Website has lots of information and resources.
 - Institute of Lighting Professionals aimed mainly at lighting professionals, but has a lot of useful articles, free and charged resources relating to lighting its impact and minimising pollution.
 - (CPRE) Night Blight for interactive maps of England's light pollution and dark skies from the countryside charity.
 - Chasing Stars Cranborne Chase AONB International Dark Sky Reserve.
 - Dark Night Skies – South Downs National Park Authority South Downs International Dark Sky Reserve.
 - APPG for Dark Skies Follow the work of the UK Parliament's only all-party group dedicated to reducing light pollution including the 'Ten Dark Sky Policies for the Government' publication (external link) Policy Plan — APPG for Dark Skies (appgdarkskies.co.uk)
 - British Astronomical Association (BAA): workshops, tutorials, and information – britastro.org
 - CIBSE: SLL: LG06: The Exterior Environment (2016): This guide provides a firm foundation from which to approach exterior lighting design.

Appendix 1 – Lighting Assessment and Plans

Whether a lighting scheme requires planning permission or not, it may need a lighting assessment and/or plan. These are created by professional lighting engineers and/or designers. When choosing an engineer or designer, it is good to ask them about their experience of lighting schemes that minimise light pollution. ILP Guidance Note 1 for the reduction of obtrusive light lists relevant British Standards and publications from The International Commission on Illumination (CIE). BRE, who provide standards for the built environment, also have a download available: Obtrusive light from proposed developments (DG529)²⁶

Local planning authorities may require environmental lighting assessments to be carried out as part of any planning applications proposing to install lighting. Information can be

²⁶ <https://www.brebookshop.com/details.jsp?id=327145>

found in the ILP Professional Lighting Guide 04: Guidance on Undertaking Environmental Lighting Impact Assessments <https://theilp.org.uk/resources> and in Appendix 1 and 3 of the Commission for Dark Skies' Blinded by the Lights²⁷?

A lighting assessment focuses on the lighting aspects of new development applications and includes design and assessment methodology. Light control zones should be adhered to, and light parameters (see ILP Guidance Note 1) given. In addition to light parameters, a lighting assessment needs to evaluate the spectral power distributions (the amount of blue light) and the polar intensity (the light distribution), to ensure that the scheme is not emitting unnecessary harmful light nor light beyond the area intended. Planners need to quickly and clearly understand how a lighting plan complies with relevant standards and how it will not cause harm to the landscape by producing light pollution. The more clearly one can show this information, the better. A lighting assessment should include and make clear the following to planning officers.

1	Site Description	A summary of visual impact assessment description adapted for lighting, including indication of applicable environmental zone.
2	Assessment Method	A description of the methodology for site visits, design and evaluation.
3	Baseline Assessment	An assessment of the current lighting at site, identification of sensitive ecological receptors, special qualities, viewpoints and general dark sky conditions.
4	Proposed Development	This is the main technical part of the plan. It should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design objectives • Task requirements • Relevant guidance, standards and legislation that relate from local to landscape • Task calculations • Obtrusive light calculations • Luminaire schedules and installation plans • Luminaire specifications (lumens, CCT, CRI, spectral distribution)
5	Residual Effects	Assessment of the changes caused by the lighting, including during the construction and operational phases. This should also include effects to the dark landscape and wildlife and overall visibility after installation and mitigations.
6	Potential Mitigation	A description of any potential mitigations used, including curfews, reduced illuminances, or shielding.

²⁷ <https://britastro.org/dark-skies/pdfs/HANDBOOKTEXT.pdf>

7	Conclusions	A summary of the report covering installation and operational phases. This should summarise the main technical requirements and be clearly presented to a planner.
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The ILP Professional Lighting Guide 04²⁸ – Guidance on undertaking environmental lighting impact assessments, has additional information on these elements.

CIBSE LG06: The exterior environment (2016²⁹) has further general guidance for lighting the exterior environment.

Appendix 2 – Planning Officer Checklist

The following flow charts aim to provide designers and planners with the basics steps to develop and assess lighting installations and internal glazing.

External Lighting

<p>JUSTIFIED LIGHTING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There must be a clear justification for lighting with full consideration to mitigate at the design phase. It should serve a beneficial purpose and be necessary. • The need for planning permission should be checked.
<p>DETERMINING LIGHTING TASKS NEEDS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that lighting conforms to recommend illuminance, spill and glare levels in appropriate key documents, e.g. BS 5489, 12464 using lowest illuminance levels as necessary. • Ensure that critical dark skies criteria are included <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Upward Light Ratio = zero ○ <3000K CCT or less, aiming for <500nm spectrum
<p>ASSESS LOCAL IMPACT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nearby locations where lighting could be a direct or indirect visual nuisance for both humans and wildlife are identified. • Lighting has regard to obtrusion and nuisance in key documents, ILP GN01, Building Regulations
<p>ASSESS LANDSCAPE IMPACT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensitive receptor sites and dark area have been assessed and identified. • Use a lighting impact assessment.
<p>APPLY MITIGATIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate mitigations have been considered. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Curfews and dimming regimes

²⁸ [PLG04 GUIDANCE ON UNDERTAKING ENVIRONMENTAL LIGHTING IMPACT ASSESSMENTS | Institution of Lighting Professionals \(theilp.org.uk\)](#)

²⁹ [Lighting Guide 06: The exterior environment \(2016\) | CIBSE](#)

<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Proximity sensors○ Additional shielding and louvres
CHECK THE PRESENCE AND RESIDUAL IMPACT <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Does the residual lighting impact still represent a significant intrusion into the landscape even if the lighting complies with obtrusion and illuminance standards?● Is there a reduction in sky quality and an increase in sky glow domes

Internal Lighting

DETERMINE THE GLAZING TYPE <ul style="list-style-type: none">● What is the intended purpose of the glazing? Domestic/Commercial?● Are there alternatives?
ASSESS THE GLAZING EXTENT <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Is the amount of glazing appropriate for the use and location?● The decision should be based on analysis of the development in the landscape taking to account:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Landscape impact○ Disruption to dark landscapes○ Visible intrusion○ Urban/rural density and remoteness○ Shielding by vegetation and buildings
SET RECOMMENDATIONS FOR VLT <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Use the table to set recommended factors for visible light transmission
APPLY MITIGATIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Determine and set additional mitigations (e.g. blackout blinds, hours of use)

Appendix 3 - Publicly available evidence base provided by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) for Wales only

In relation to development in Wales, Natural Resources Wales have advised the following publicly available evidence base to support planning applications, which includes:

- LANDMAP. [Natural Resources Wales / LANDMAP - the Welsh landscape baseline](#)
- Evidence on tranquillity and place: [Tranquillity and Place \(arcgis.com\)](#)
- Evidence on dark skies: [Wales Dark Skies \(arcgis.com\)](#)
- Evidence on visible settings of designated landscapes: [Natural Resources Wales / Considering the visible setting when choosing your development site](#)

- Evidence in relation to the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources within the State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR) for Wales. [Natural Resources Wales / State of Natural Resources Report \(SoNaRR\) for Wales 2020](#)
- [Natural Resources Wales / Area Statements and Designated Landscapes](#)

V1 – Draft for Wye Valley JAC Meeting of March 2024 to endorse as a consultation draft
- JB Feb 2024

DRAFT

Agenda Item 8

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY NATIONAL LANDSCAPE
AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

4th March 2024

FARMING IN PROTECTED LANDSCAPES (FIPL) AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND (SDF) GRANTS

Purpose

To update members on the progress of the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme and the AONB Sustainable Development Fund (SDF).

Recommendation

That the JAC endorse the allocations of grants under the FiPL programme and SDF to date for 2023/24.

Key Issues

- The DEFRA funded Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme in England had an initial allocation of £339,063 for 2023/24 which has subsequently been increased.
- The FiPL Assessment Panel has approved grants totalling £356,307 in 2023/24 having been able to access additional FiPL funding from the DEFRA National Pot.
- The FiPL allocation for 2024/25, currently believed to be the last year of the programme, is £362,384 of which £260,631 has already been allocated, leaving £101,753 remaining.
- The Welsh Government Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) currently has £82,961 allocated from the £100,000 available for 2023/24, plus £15,000 from a returned grant leaving £32,038 available. There is also £53,227 already allocated from the £100,000 available for 2024/25, leaving £46,773 available.
- The Wye Valley National Landscape Fund hosted by the Herefordshire Community Foundation (HCF) is currently closed for applications to allow the Endowment Fund to grow.

Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL)

The Farming in Protected Landscape (FiPL) programme currently runs until March 2025. DEFRA manage a National Pot to redistribute unallocated funds within any one year. The Wye Valley National Landscape FiPL Assessment Panel had fully allocated the funds available by December 2023. With further applications received the National Landscape Team applied for additional FiPL funding from the DEFRA National Pot and were successful. Consequently further applications were able to be approved totalling £17,244. This process can be repeated if there are sufficient funds and appropriate applications.

The FiPL Assessment Panel is delegated with deciding on each application over £5,000. Application under £5,000 are determined by the AONB Manager. Since the last JAC the following FiPL applications have been approved:

Code	Applicant	2023/4 £	2024/5 £
WV056	Herefordshire Meadows Grasslands		19,450.00
WV057	Caswell Farm		1,244.30
WV058	Lewstone Farm	388.03	
WV059	Bryants Court	25,000.00	6,788.62
WV060	Caradoc River Meadows		4,828.78
WV061	The Dingle Veteran Trees	473.46	976.00
WV062	Wye and Usk Foundation - Farm Advice		35,000.00
WV063	Weir End Moor Meadow		6,879.15
WV064	Underhill Farm	25,000.00	1,987.40
WV065	Upper Pengethley Farm OSB	12,767.05	533.00
WV066	British Canoeing	4,300.05	2,248.00
WV067	Coxbury Farm OSB	10,680.28	447.00
WV068	Staunton Meend		6,722.00
WV069	Grazing Management Conservation Grazing	19,825.75	
WV070	WUF INNS Yr2		15,308.00
WV071	Rectory Orchard renewal Yr2		747.12
WV072	Dryslade Farm Educational Events	543.00	1,452.00

DEFRA recognise the positive feedback and outcomes delivered by the FiPL programme and are considering how the benefits can be carried forward beyond March 2025 into the Environmental Land Management (ELM) agri-environment scheme.

Guidance and assistance to farmers and land managers applying to the FiPL programme is provided by Anna Stankiewicz, AONB Farming in Protected Landscapes Officer, along with Farm Advisors from the Wye & Usk Foundation and Herefordshire Meadows. For advice or to discuss any project ideas, please contact Anna on farming@wyevalleyaonb.org.uk.

Sustainable Development Fund (SDF)

Welsh Government have allocated £100,000 of SDF each year for 2023/24 and 2024/25. The SDF Assessment Panel is delegated with deciding on each application over £3,000. Application under £3,000 are determined by the AONB Manager.

The SDF for 2023/24 has been fully allocated. For 2024/25 the Panel has already awarded £43,227 to projects, and further applications are waiting to be assessed.

The following applications have been approved since the last JAC:

Code	Applicant	Project Title	years		Total Project value	SDF Grant
			This	Total		
2023/24						

WV11 YR23W	Monmouth Town Council	Monmouth Subway and Underpass Murals Project	1	2	£12,520	£9,020.00
WV12 YR24W	FoD & WV Tourism	Community Constellations	1	1	£5,200	£3,000.00
WV13 YR24W	Bee's for Development	Bees for Monmouthshire	1	2	£40,000	£19,033.03
WV 14 YR24W	Nelson Garden	Nelson Garden Britannia Statue	1	1	£1,320	£820.00
						£31,873.03
2024/25						
WV01 YR24W	Wye Coppice CIC	Wye Coppice Training	2	2	£20,000.00	£7,226.10
WV02 YR24W	GWT	Restoring The Wern	2	2	£6,000.00	£3,502.50
WV03 YR24W	Coed Lleol-Small Woods	Nature based wellbeing	2	2	£10,000.00	£6,285.00
WV04 YR24W	ACE Monmouth	Regen Farming Monitoring project	2	2	£18,186.00	£1,213.40
WV05 YR24W	WVRF CIC	The Earth Beneath Our Feet	2	2	£187,000.00	£25,000.00
						£43,227.00

Lucinda James, AONB Community Links Officer, assists applicants with projects. Community groups, local organisations and individuals are eligible. If you are interested in applying please contact Lucinda on community@wyevalleyaonb.org.uk.

Wye Valley National Landscape Fund with Herefordshire Community Foundation (HCF)

The Wye Valley National Landscape Fund with Herefordshire Community Foundation (HCF) was established with a £50,000 Endowment Fund. Project grants are awarded from the interest and any growth or donations above that base Fund. There is currently £10,000 also donated specifically for the Youth Rangers. The Fund is currently closed for applications to allow the Endowment Fund to grow. When funds allow, the National Landscape Team &/or SDF Assessment Panel, as appropriate, reviews and comments on applications to the Fund to advise HCF on awarding grants.

Background

For more details on grants and application processes see <https://www.wyevalley-nl.org.uk/caring-for-wye-valley-aonb/grants/>.

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NATIONAL UPDATES – ENGLAND AND WALES

Purpose

To advise members on issues and updates from DEFRA, Welsh Government and the National Landscapes Association.

FOR INFORMATION

Key Issues

- DEFRA published the Government's Response to the Glover Review 'Implementing the Landscapes Review: summary of responses' in November 2023 including an 'Action Plan for Protected Landscapes'
- Welsh Government, through Tirweddau Cymru Landscapes Wales (TCLW), offered member training on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and on Tackling the Nature and Climate Emergencies.
- There are two events at the Senedd promoting the Designated Landscapes in Wales, one in March organised by Campaign for National Parks and the other in April by the National Landscapes Association.
- Tirweddau Cymru Landscapes Wales (TCLW) will host a Seminar in Bangor on 16th-17th May on 'Decarbonising the Welsh Designated Landscapes and working with our communities to achieve Net Zero'.
- The National Landscapes Association hosted the National Landscapes re-branding launch in November, alongside the Chair's Conference and AGM.
- The Investing in Nature team within the National Landscapes Association are providing training on Green finance, along with National Parks Partnership.
- The National Landscapes Conference will be on 5th – 7th July 2024, at Harper Adams, Shropshire.

Reasons

Following the Glover Review (2019) and Environmental Improvement Plan, DEFRA ran a consultation in early 2022 regarding changes to Protected Landscapes, their role in the planning system, the Environmental Land Management schemes and, and in managing visitor pressures. It received over 15,000 responses. In November 2023 'Implementing the Landscapes Review: summary of responses' was published which included an 'Action Plan for Protected Landscapes'.

Tirweddau Cymru Landscapes Wales (TCLW) and Welsh Government have been collaborating on members' training and through the Biodiversity Deep Dive Designated Landscapes Working Group.

The National Landscapes Association continues to work with both Westminster and Welsh Government on promotion of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, through the re-branding as National Landscapes, which has been well received by Ministers in both countries.

Implications

DEFRA's Action Plan for Protected Landscapes, focuses on 4 themes:

- *Strengthen legislative duties* – particularly through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 amendments to the 'Duty' on public bodies (in England), requiring them to 'to seek to further the purposes of designation'
- *Collaborative Partnership for Better Outcomes for People and Nature* - establishing a new Protected Landscapes Partnership to build on collaboration between National Parks England, the National Landscapes Association, National Trails UK and Natural England, along with publication of a new Targets and Outcomes Framework which will link to revised National Park and AONB Management Plans
- *Boosting financial support for Protected Landscapes* - particularly through providing additional funding, including extending the Farming in Protected Landscapes and Access for All programmes
- *Long term sustainable funding* – including reviewing the funding formula for National Landscape Teams and supporting National Landscapes and Parks to build the capacity to generate more private finance in Protected Landscapes.

The Government's guidance is awaited on the implementation of the strengthened powers and duties of responsible bodies in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023.

Designated Landscapes in Wales are benefiting from members training and two forthcoming opportunities to present issues and features to Members of the Senedd.

A celebratory event at the Senedd on the 24th April will be hosted by the National Landscapes Association and the five Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in Wales. The invitation is extended to JAC members and other key partners of the National Landscape Partnerships. Please contact the AONB Manager if you are interested.

The National Landscapes Conference will be take place from 3rd - 5th July at Harper Adams University. The theme is *Changing Landscapes: Changing Minds*, and will investigate what the role is of natural beauty and landscape designations in ever-changing landscapes; and what the different ways of working are and resilience needed if natural beauty is to prevail in the contested debate on the value and use of land and sea. The conference will explore these and other issues in the context of the policy and personal responses to the of climate and nature crises, and the unrelenting political pursuit of economic growth. Cannock Chase, Clwydian Range and Dee Valley, and Shropshire Hills National Landscapes will be the Conference hosts. They will be hosting the field trips along with a range of other organisations: the National Forest, the Peak District National Park, Cheshire Sandstone Ridge, Shropshire Wildlife Trust and Natural England. We hope there will be good attendance, at least matching the record numbers last year, in Bath. Several members of the Wye Valley National Landscape Team will be attending.

Background

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/landscapes-review-national-parks-and-aonbs-implementing-the-review/outcome/implementing-the-landscapes-review-summary-of-responses>

The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 strengthened the powers and duties of responsible bodies (in England), which includes the local County, District, Town & Parish councils, by amending Sections 85 and 90 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, under LURA Part 12 s245 (5-10):

“In exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in an area of outstanding natural beauty in England, a relevant authority...must seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty.”

“The Secretary of State may by regulations make provision requiring a relevant authority...to contribute to the preparation, implementation or review of [AONB Management] Plans....”.

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TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY NATIONAL LANDSCAPE
AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

4th March 2024

PARTNER AND NATIONAL LANDSCAPE TEAM PROGRESS REPORTS AND UPDATES

Purpose

To advise members of activity of the Wye Valley National Landscape Team and other partners.

FOR INFORMATION

Below are update reports on the following National Landscape Team & partner initiatives: -

- a. Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership Seminar - 19th March 2024
- b. Welcome Tintern - Visitor Experience Improvements with MonLife, Monmouthshire County Council
- c. River Wye update and collaborations, including the Wye Catchment Partnership
- d. Lower Wye Track and Trails consultation & strategy
- e. Species Action Plan – Hedgehogs First Response Unit
- f. Wye Valley Youth Rangers
- g. Wye Valley River Festival 3rd-12th May 2024

Further information and updates are also in the latest edition of Picturesque, the Wye Valley National Landscape newsletter, see:

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKHEREF/bulletins/389307d>

a. Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership Seminar - Tuesday 19th March, Old Court Hotel, Whitchurch (verbal) : 10:00am-4:00pm

The theme of this year's annual seminar is 'The National Landscape and its function in the Planning System' which will cover the National Landscapes rebranding and the changes through the Levelling Up & Regeneration Act 2023 and other legislation in England and Wales. The invitation has been sent to all JAC members, local Ward members and Town, Parish and Community Council clerks for distribution to their members.

b. Welcome Tintern – Visitor Experience Improvements with MonLife, Monmouthshire County Council

Utilising Brilliant Basics capital funding from Welsh Government (Visit Wales) improvements to the visitor experience in Tintern are nearing completion. These have built on experience managing visitor flows through the pandemic, feedback from visitors and the Tintern Visitor ambassadors, and via community and business consultations. The scheme has been developed in close cooperation with Cadw and comprises three elements:

- Replacing and updating tourism signage intended to be clearer for visitors, including new parking and attraction signage.
- New visitor welcome and orientation signage and a further phase of fingerposts shortly to be installed, including new signage for visitors arriving via the Wye Valley Greenway and on the Wye Valley Walk.

- Resurfacing of the Lower Wireworks Car Park including fully marked spaces, disabled parking spaces and for the first time EV charging provision. These works complement the previous improvement works carried out under the Overlooking the Wye scheme.

Redundant signage is also being removed as part of the project to simplify the visitor experience and avoid unnecessary visual clutter.



c. River Wye update and collaborations, including the Wye Catchment Partnership

The Wye Catchment Partnership, through the support of the Environment Agency, has been undertaking a Systems Mapping exercise of the catchment, led by Mott MacDonald. This has enabled a multitude of Wye interest groups to understand each other’s perspective on issues and activity in the catchment and is creating a shared platform for understanding trade-offs and making decisions. This will help inform the Wye Catchment Management Plan which is being produced this year by the Wye Catchment Partnership. Closer relationships are also being built with the Nutrient Management Board (NMB) and the Wye Agri-Supply Partnership.

The new website for the Wye Catchment Partnership is now live

<https://wyecatchmentpartnership.org/> and includes a ‘Project Areas & Funding Map’ (see tab on the [new WCP website here](#)). This has been progressed through a Task & Finish Group, led by Pat Stirling (Citizen Scientist), and outlines projects and initiatives across the Wye Catchment. It has already received 1000+ views.

The Environment Agency also host a River Wye Water Quality website: <https://engageenvironmentagency.uk.engagementhq.com/hub-page/river-wye-water-quality-2> which has information on some of the key challenges facing the catchment and highlights the on-going work and evidence to make improvements.

The Wye Valley National Landscape Team continues to manage partnership projects and collaborative initiatives including through the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme and the Wye Adapt to Climate Change project, to support farmers and land-managers in and around the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the lower stretches of the River Wye. This collaboration includes the Wyescapes: food, nature, water Landscape Recovery scheme which is progressing through the approval process with DEFRA and the Environment Agency. A Programme Manager is currently being recruited by the Herefordshire Rural Hub, as the lead partner in the scheme. It is anticipated that the 2 year development phase of the scheme will commence early in the new financial year. This will see the 40 or so farmers involved in the scheme, between Goodrich and Bredwardine on the Wye and Mordiford to Leominster on the Lugg, sign up to 20 years agreements for floodplain management and other agri-environment options.

Friends of the River Wye recently hosted a 'Restore the River' evening conference at which a wide range of speakers from the public, private and voluntary sectors outlined the positive actions, and the challenges, that they are working with individually and collectively. The chair, freelance journalist Nicola Cutcher, suggested that "we are hopefully past peak-worst with the River". But the challenges remain significant and considerable, and concerted collaborative effort remains paramount.

Natural Resources Wales are setting up their team of River Wye Restoration Officers to put in place improvements to address the ecological decline of the upper Wye SAC. One of the team is Nickie Moore, formerly the AONB Lower Wye Catchments Project Officer. We wish her all the best in her new role looking after the other end of the Wye.

d. Lower Wye Valley Tracks & Trails consultation & strategy

The Wye Valley National Landscape Team are working with Monmouthshire County Council, NRW and other stakeholders to develop an Integrated Recreational Access Strategy and action plan. The Lower Wye Tracks & Trails strategy and action plan will help provide the best experience for all those that enjoy the tracks and trails in the Monmouthshire part of the National Landscape. The aim of the work is to develop the most practical ways of supporting the requirements of all types of users, while protecting the natural and built environment for current and future generations.

A 12 week consultation, from 8th November 2023 to 12th January 2024, received over 350 responses and has revealed a lot of data about user types, activities and key concerns. Responses came from individuals, both local residents and visitors, and representatives of 50 organisations and interest groups including; Community groups; Environmental groups; 4x4 vehicle & Trail bike users; Cyclists/Mountain Bikers; Walkers/ramblers; and Horse riders/drivers. Findings include:

- The vast majority of users (89%) are local and those walking on foot, undertaking conservation or outdoor activities make up 73% of all users.
- The need to encourage responsible behaviours among all users and discourage any undesirable behaviours is seen as the highest priority, with 68% saying this is 'very important'.

- A recognition of the need to support landowners in maintenance of the tracks and trails, particularly among those involved in conservation activities
- Almost half (48%) of those taking part in the consultation believe it is 'very important' to respond to the opportunity to support the improvement of the tracks and trails and reduce the impact of flooding and erosion.

Key Themes & Actions Emerging

- Responsible Tourism that can influence all visitors to the Wye Valley is a key principle for the new strategy.
- Fill the gaps in understanding of different visitors – good information is vital but so too is appreciating others' perspectives and needs.
- A new trail etiquette should be considered, perhaps by a code of conduct, signs in some places and by a wholesale boost in volunteering.
- Protection of this precious natural environment is critical and needs continued vigilance. Some tracks and trails may need to be off limits for a time to enable repair and regeneration.
- Improving access to the tracks & trails is important, so too is opening up access to all users who may have mobility or other impediments.

Two follow-up public engagement meetings were held in St Arvans Memorial Hall and Pelham Hall, Penallt on 27th & 28th February respectively.

It is intended that the Lower Wye Valley Tracks & Trails Strategy & Action Plan will be presented to at the next JAC meeting in July.

e. Species Action Plan – Hedgehogs First Response Unit

The National Landscape Team are supporting a new venture by our Hedgehog Hero Dylan Allman, who has started a Hedgehog First Response Unit as part of his Hedgehog Aware project. We have trained and supported 8 volunteers to be part of this project, who will respond to calls from the public when they have found a sick or injured Hedgehog. For further information see <https://www.facebook.com/MonmouthHedgehogFRU/> and the article in Picturesque.

f. Wye Valley Youth Rangers

The relaunch of the Wye Valley Ranger scheme commences with the first session due on 23rd March, with the help of the Gwent Green Grid team, Coed Lleol and Wye Coppice CIC. Activities will include, Woodland Flowers walk, Woodland Treasure hunt, making beeswax healing balm, whistle whittling and bush craft. For further details please contact Lucinda James, Wye Valley National Landscape Community Links Officer.

g. Wye Valley River Festival 3rd-12th May 2024

The Wye Valley River Festival CIC will be presenting the next full Wye Valley River Festival between 3rd & 12th May 2024. For full details keep an eye on <https://wyevalleyriverfest.com/>.