
Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB Position Statement (April 2016)

Obtrusive Lighting in the Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Introduction

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) are designated by the Government for the purpose of ensuring that the natural beauty of the finest landscapes in England and Wales is conserved and enhanced. The AONB Partnership produces occasional position statements outlining its position on specific issues.

The Partnership recognises that lighting can be beneficial to society in terms of guiding and providing a sense of security, however lighting in the wrong place or at the wrong time is a form of pollution as it has an adverse impact upon the environment

Purpose

This position statement, endorsed by the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB Partnership¹, provides guidance to local planning authorities, landowners and other interested parties regarding lighting in the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB.

Background

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

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

The Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB Management Plan, 2013-2018, endorsed by the 28 members of the Partnership, includes the following in relation to tranquillity and the natural beauty and special qualities of the AONB. Section 3.5.28 states:

Another indicator of tranquillity is the lack of light pollution in much of the AONB.

Position

It is considered by the AONB Partnership that exterior lighting proposed as part of any development, within the AONB or where it may impact upon its setting or lighting within the setting impacts upon the AONB, it should be kept to the minimum required and only appropriate to its purpose, so as to protect the area's natural beauty and special qualities.

¹ Suffolk Coast & Heaths Partnership is made up of public, private and third sector organisations with an interest in the area. Details at: <http://www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org/projects-and-partnerships/the-aonb-partnership/>

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

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

National Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework notes in paragraph 125⁴:

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

For further information

Contact the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB on 01394 445225 or schaonb@suffolk.gov.uk

³ *Guidance notes for the reduction of light pollution*³ produced by the Institute of Lighting Engineers at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/60777/2116950.pdf

⁴ National Planning Policy Framework at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/60777/2116950.pdf