



The countryside charity
Hampshire

VERSION 1 as at September 2021

Position Statement

CPRE Hampshire Position Statement - Relative Tranquillity and Dark Night Skies

CPRE Issue

CPRE has long campaigned for planning policies to protect tranquillity and dark night skies. The South Downs National Park has protective policies in its adopted Local Plan, and Local Plan reviews offer the opportunity to include policies to conserve and enhance tranquillity and dark night skies. As appears from CPRE Tranquillity and Dark Skies maps, much of the Hampshire landscape is of high tranquillity and dark skies and it is important that this is protected within Local Plans.

CPRE Guidance

Support for tranquillity and dark skies policies in Local Plans is to be found in NPPF (unchanged in the 2021 revision) as follows:

185. 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)

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.

Relative tranquillity is considered to be a state of calm, quietude and is associated with a feeling of peace. It relates to quality of life, and there is good scientific evidence that it also helps to promote health and well-being. It is a perceptual quality of the landscape and is



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influenced by things that people can both see and hear in the landscape around them. It is therefore not the same thing as noise assessment. Zero noise impact does not mean zero impact on relative tranquillity.

While this meaning of tranquillity (as developed by CPRE) is now widely accepted, the NPPF focuses on noise alone, presumably because it is considered easier to measure. However, LPAs should be encouraged to use the wider meaning in their Local Plans.

The South Downs National Park has produced maps of relative tranquillity (*The South Downs National Park Tranquillity Study*) across the national park which provide a baseline against which proposals can be assessed. This identifies areas as of high, intermediate or low tranquillity. To comply with NPPF 185 (b) LPAs need to conduct similar studies.

The South Downs National Park has also undertaken mapping of the quality of dark skies (see *The South Downs National Park Dark Skies Technical Advice Note*) which results in categorising the national park into dark sky zones, again as a baseline - E0 Dark Sky Core, E1 Transition Zones lying between larger urban settlements and the surrounding darker skies, and E3/4 larger settlements with substantially lower quality of dark night sky, primarily due to street lighting and light spill from buildings. In order to be able to comply with NPPF 185(c) it would seem that similar maps should be produced by LPAs

Failing locally produced maps, national CPRE Tranquillity and Dark Skies maps are available

Sample Policies

Tranquillity

1. Development proposals will be permitted where they conserve and enhance relative tranquillity. Proposals need to consider
 - a) impacts that the proposals are likely to cause by changes in the visual and aural environment; and
 - b) experience of users of the public right of way network and other publicly accessible locations.



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2. Development proposals that are located in areas which are either vulnerable to change, or at the higher range of relative tranquillity, as will be subject to the most rigorous scrutiny in order to ensure that relative tranquillity is conserved and enhanced.

Dark Night Skies

1. Development proposals will be permitted where they conserve and enhance the intrinsic quality of dark night skies

2. Development proposals must demonstrate that all opportunities to reduce light pollution have been taken and must ensure that the measured and observed sky quality in the surrounding area is not negatively affected and that, where external lighting or light spill from internal lighting cannot be avoided, then adverse impacts are mitigated to the greatest reasonable extent.

NB In considering the wording of individual policies in Local Plans, it is important to bear in mind that Local Plans must be looked at as a whole. This means, for example, that policies for the protection of landscape must be applied when considering each and every planning application; and accordingly, there is generally no need for other policies to refer specifically to landscape matters,