



**Bryniau Clwyd a
Dyffryn Dyfrdwy**
Clwydian Range
and Dee Valley

Ardal o Harddwch Naturiol Eithriadol
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

**JOINT COMMITTEE
Of the
CLWYDIAN RANGE & DEE VALLEY
AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY**

Held on: 2nd February 2017

Lead Member / Officer: Howard Sutcliffe

Report Author: David Shiel

Title: Dark Sky Status

1. What is the report about?

The Report outlines the process and benefits of pursuing a Dark Sky Designation with the International Dark Skies Association. The preservation of natural darkness has a wide range of benefits for our own health and wellbeing, for biodiversity and for the tourism business sector.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

A decision is required on whether to pursue the designation of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley as a Dark Sky Community as defined by the International Dark Sky Association.

3. What are the Recommendations?

Recommendation: To pursue the designation of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley as a Dark Sky Community – as defined by the International Dark Sky Association.

4. Report details.

In 2017 the AONB commissioned Bro and Dark Skies Wales to look into the feasibility of a Dark Sky designation for the AONB – to outline the benefits and to make a preliminary assessment of the quality of the skies across the AONB.

The initial assessment of the quality of the skies in the AONB shows that, although there are a few areas of concern, (Llangollen and some areas to the North East) in general the sky quality would meet the standards required for a Dark Sky designation.

Dark Sky designation would show a commitment to preserving and improving the quality of the night skies in the AONB and the benefits associated with it:

Health – *Light pollution has been shown to impact on human sleep patterns with links to long term illness such as obesity, depression, diabetes and cancer.*

Biodiversity – *60% of our wildlife depends on darkness for its survival – light pollution has been shown to influence animal behaviour and ecosystems.*

Economy – *Dark Sky status in areas such as Snowdonia, Brecon Beacons, Northumberland have become integral elements of the tourist economy where the quality of the skies are an important part of the tourism offer.*

Community – *Reduction in light levels has obvious cost saving benefits and will also reduce carbon emissions*

The report recommends an application to the IDA for Dark Sky Community Status.

As part of this application it will be necessary to

- Carry out a lighting audit for the AONB – detailing the location and nature of all public lighting
- Produce a Lighting Plan for the AONB agreed by the 3 Authorities
- Further engage with tourism businesses
- Develop an Education programme.
- Further dark sky monitoring and a commitment to carry out annual monitoring.

5. How does it contribute to the Clwydian Range & Dee Valley AONB Management Plans Priorities?

An application to the IDA for Dark Sky recognition contributes to the following AONB Management Plan Objectives:

- PolART1 – To promote the sustainable use and enjoyment and understanding of the landscape of the AONB in a way that contributes to local prosperity and social inclusiveness

- PolCP3 – Ensure that local businesses and communities feel a sense of ownership and responsibility for their surroundings
- PCO3 – Foster a sense of place and local pride to secure social well-being
- LQCO4 – Protect the tranquillity of the AONB and take steps where possible to reduce noise and light pollution

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

Cost of application to International Dark Sky Association and associated Lighting Management Plan / monitoring is estimated to be £20k

Welsh Government have already provided £10k and LEADER funding has been identified as a suitable source of match funding.

Lighting Management Plan may identify actions for Street Lighting Services for 3 Authorities – The development of this plan – with the Services in the 3 Authorities will identify where likely cost and savings will be.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) undertaken on the decision? The completed EqIA template should be attached as an appendix to the report.

- A prosperous Denbighshire - **Positive**
- A resilient Denbighshire - **Positive**
- A healthier Denbighshire - **Positive**
- A more equal Denbighshire - **Positive**
- A Denbighshire of cohesive communities - **Positive**
- A Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language - **Positive**
- A globally responsible Denbighshire – **Neutral**

The project is focused on improving the quality of the night sky across the AONB and the multiple benefits that this will have in terms of public health, biodiversity, energy efficiency and the tourism economy. These benefits are well documents in areas such as Brecon Beacons National Park, Snowdonia National Park, Northumberland and other areas with Dark Sky Status.

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

The Report details consultation carried out with Business Sector – Clwydian Range Tourism Group, Denbighshire Tourism Forum, Communities and Volunteer Groups. Consultation with the AONB Partnership and Partnership Working Group.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

N/A

10. Power to make the Decision

The Legal basis lies in Section 101 (5) of the Local Government Act of 1972 and the Local Government Act 2000, where Local Authorities can enter arrangements to 'discharge functions jointly with one or more Local Authorities by means of a Joint Committee.'