



May 2021

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about the proposed Dark Skies policies.

I welcome the All-Party Parliamentary Group's proposals to reduce light pollution and read their ten policy proposals with interest. Indeed, the proposals are wide-reaching, including recommendations on strengthening planning policy through the National Planning Policy Framework, overhauling industry standards on lighting products and increasing engagement and awareness of light pollution.

You will be interested to know that five parks have already committed to conserving dark skies, and I have been assured that changes to the planning framework will give careful consideration to these proposals during the review process. The framework already requires that planning policies and decisions should "*limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.*" Naturally, there is always room to go further on the good progress that has already been made.

The type and quality of lighting products should definitely be considered from the outset. The best place to impact development is at the planning stage, which is why organisations should engage with local planning authorities to ensure strong emphasis is placed on it. Non-statutory consultees in the planning process can make a crucial contribution in this regard and help guide the strategic direction of local efforts.

The Department for Transport has encouraged local authorities to replace street lighting with more modern technologies such as LED lighting units in order to reduce glare. Such initiatives are supported by the Campaign to Protect Rural England and the British Astronomical Society. The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has also published assessments on the impact of artificial lighting.

While not all streetlights and other lighting can be turned off, I believe this work on dark skies has significant potential to reduce overall light pollution and raise awareness about this important issue.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY