

Update the existing legal framework

The existing legal framework regulating light pollution is derived from statute and therefore can only be amended by Parliament. New legislation is therefore likely to be necessary to truly protect the UK's dark skies and night-time landscape.

1. Strengthen the National Planning Policy Framework: for the first time ever, make extensive specific reference to the control of obtrusive light in the National Planning Policy Framework.
2. Expand the scope of the planning permission process: introduce regulations for exterior lighting that are similar to those which currently cover advertisements.
3. Strengthen Statutory Nuisance Provisions: remove exemptions to give local authorities a more effective method of preventing nuisance lighting.

Supercharge standards for lighting

Following examples from other countries such as the 'French Law 2018', an overhaul of the rules applicable to outdoor lighting installations and internal light spill is paramount to prevent, limit and reduce light pollution.

4. Create a statutory Commission for Dark Skies: set up a statutory body to punish non-compliance and empowering local authorities and councils to enforce regulations.
5. Set standards for the brightness and colour temperature of lighting: establish legal limits to the amount of blue light that luminaires can have in their spectrum and encourage manufacturers, distributors and installers of lighting to adopt best practice in this area.
6. Set standards for the direction and density of lighting: introduce a legal requirement that all lighting units are sold and distributed with instructions for the control of obtrusive light and dark skies-friendly mounting instructions and issue penalties for non-compliance.
7. Create 'best practice' use for lighting: design a national program of best practice 'Dark Sky Hours' in which categories of lighting can be either dimmed or turned off completely in consultation with the community, lighting professionals and local police.

Incentivise dark sky governance at the national, local and individual level

Introduce new initiatives at every level of government which create clear incentives for dark sky preservation and educate about the effects of light pollution as part of wider climate change awareness.

8. Appoint a designated 'Minister for Dark Skies': give a new cross-departmental Minister a clear remit for the control and prevention of light pollution, as well as oversight of planning and environmental policies that concern dark skies.
9. Create a 'Dark Sky Towns & Cities' initiative: give local government the power to go further to reduce light pollution by creating a voluntary 'Dark Sky Town/City' classification.
10. Emphasise the role of education: work with educational and cultural institutions and NGOs to achieve widespread public awareness of the issue of light pollution.