



Planning: Planning Applications

Planning applications must be made to the 'Local Planning Authority' (LPA), for any development that involves the change of use to a piece of land.

Having received a planning application, the LPA is required to consider the economic, social and environmental implications of the proposal, and may seek views from interested parties, including local residents. The full range of consultations that the LPA is obligated to undertake will depend on the scale of the proposal and the nature of the development.

Which applications does Yorkshire Wildlife Trust consult on?

Due to limited resources, it is generally only within our remit to make representations in relation to very large-scale applications, and applications which may impact on one of our Living Landscapes or nature reserves. Local authorities and/or Natural England (acting as a statutory consultant where an application involves a SSSI or protected species) both have responsibilities to ensure protection and enhancement of the natural environment through the planning system.

What can you do?

Planning applications can usually be obtained from the [Local Authority's website](#) or by contacting the planning officer. When looking through the application you should look for whether it will directly or indirectly affect wildlife habitats. If the development is likely to affect wildlife habitats, it is not necessary for these habitats to be on the proposed development site. Some applications may have an Environmental Statement or Ecological report (a professional study on how the development may affect the environment) which should detail any surveys that have been carried out.

Writing a letter of response

Frequently developments can be improved by putting in more enhancements for wildlife. Do make suggestions based on your local knowledge of what wildlife is in the area. The [National Planning Policy Framework](#) states that planning policies should 'promote the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species populations'.

When writing a letter of response use the word '**object**' if you are against the application as this holds more weight. You can use a **conditional objection** where a development is acceptable subject to a few alterations or conditions. Make sure your response is reasoned and any conditions you suggest are realistic and achievable. If you have some evidence of significant wildlife, you may lodge a request for a more detailed biological survey/study, e.g. a bat survey.

Objections should include supporting evidence based on material considerations such as relevant legislation and policies. Look for policies that support your objection in the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) or in your Local Authority's plans. In general, objections can be made on nature conservation grounds where a development:

- Directly affects an important wildlife site or priority habitat
- Indirectly affects an important wildlife site or priority habitat (e.g. hydrology, visitor pressure, noise or pollution)
- Affects a protected species, or a priority species (as listed under either the UK or County Biodiversity Action Plan)
- Reduces green space available as wildlife corridors along rivers, streams and hedgerows etc, especially through urban areas