



Planning Application Responses – ‘Standing Advice’ to LPAs

Due to the limited resources of the High Weald National Landscape Unit, covering the large area of the High Weald National Landscape (some 560 square miles and 15 Local Planning Authorities), we are unable to provide individual written comments on every planning application, and the following ‘standing advice’ should be applied. This advice should also be used by LPAs in considering pre-application proposals, with which the HWNL Unit might not be involved.

We have to be selective about which planning applications we provide written comment on, in order to manage our limited resources and direct them where most needed. This means we can normally only get involved with larger or strategic schemes. However, it should be noted that even smaller proposals (e.g. householder or development associated with tourism or agriculture) in the HWNL have the potential to cause harm to the natural beauty of the area, through inappropriate or urbanising siting, scale, materials, colour, lighting, or through cumulative impacts.

Where we do not provide a written consultation response to an LPA to a planning application, **this should not be taken to mean we in any way support the proposal, nor that we necessarily consider it would not result in harm the natural beauty of the High Weald National Landscape.** Rather, that we expect that the LPA will themselves consider and assess the application in the context of:

- Paragraph 189 of the NPPF, which sets out that ‘**great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Landscapes**’ which (along with National Parks and the Broads) ‘have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues’. It also sets out that ‘**the scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited**’ and that ‘**development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.**’
- the [High Weald AONB Management Plan 2024-2029](#), in particular the various **Objectives and Actions** set out therein for each of the Key Character Components of natural beauty described in the Management Plan. Where an LPA is refusing a planning application, it is advised that officer or Committee reports should include reference to those specific Management Plan Objectives that it is considered the proposal would be contrary to.
- HWNL Management Plan supporting documents and guidance, including, where relevant:
 - [high weald-housing design guide](#)
 - [high-weald-national-landscape-dark-skies-planning-advice-note](#)
 - [HWNL-Soft-Landscaping-in-development-proposals-published-version.pdf](#)
 - [high-weald-colour-study](#)
 - [solar-farms-and-the-high-weald-national-landscape-position-statement](#)

The [High Weald AONB Management Plan 2024-2029](#) is adopted by all the relevant local authorities with land in the High Weald National Landscape as their policy for the management of the area and for the carrying out of their functions in relation to it, and is a material consideration for planning applications affecting the HWNL.

- ❖ As well as points applicable to larger developments, and broader points regarding impacts on the intrinsic rural character of the landscape, the Actions of the Management Plan contain a number of useful detailed guidance points relevant to development management considerations of smaller scale works, including, for example, alterations to landform, new or replacement dwellings, extensions to residential curtilages, boundary treatments, impermeable surfaces, location and design of new accesses, historic traditional buildings, light spill, farm diversification and agricultural occupancy conditions.

Where development is outside of, but in the setting of the High Weald National Landscape, we would expect you to take into account the matter of the setting of the High Weald National Landscape in the consideration of the application, in accordance with paragraph 189 of the NPPF.

We would also remind you that Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 requires local authorities to seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of AONBs in making decisions that affect the designated area.