

## **Guidelines for the referral of planning applications to the Mendip Hills AONB Unit for monitoring**

The Mendip Hills AONB Partnership Committee requests that only planning applications that have **strategic or AONB wide implications** are sent to the Mendip Hills AONB Planning Liaison Officer for consideration and monitoring. The Partnership Committee has delegated responsibility for this to the Planning Liaison Officer who may respond, in appropriate cases, on behalf of the AONB Unit. In the case of major applications, the Planning Liaison Officer may consult appropriate members of the Partnership Committee, statutory undertakers and other relevant bodies as required.

Types of applications that should be referred for consultation and monitoring may include, for example:

- Major development of real significance or threat to the character of the AONB (e.g. residential, employment or commercial development on sites not identified in Local Plans/LDFs).
- Tips and other waste disposal proposals.
- New, and extensions to, minerals workings or major built development at quarries.
- Wind turbines and other significant renewable energy development.
- New telecom masts.

Generally, the AONB Planning Officer will only comment on applications referred to the Unit in exceptional circumstances; for example, where it is considered that the overarching national policy protection for AONBs in PPS7 and the local authorities' own planning policies protecting designated parts of the Mendip Hills, need to be supplemented in order to fulfil the primary purpose of AONB designation i.e. to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape. Where appropriate, the AONB Planning Officer may comment on matters of design, materials and impacts on the environment if they are deemed incompatible with the character or biodiversity of the area.

### **Council Planning Officers discretion**

If Council planning officers consider that there are planning applications other than those having strategic or AONB wide implications where, without a response from the AONB Unit, significant inappropriate development would occur to the detriment of the AONB designation, they may request comments from the AONB Planning Officer.

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