

Our position on planning applications



John Muir Trust's purpose

The John Muir Trust exists to protect and restore wild places for the benefit of nature, climate and people. This policy sets out the circumstances under which the Trust will comment on or object to planning applications, focusing on developments on Trust land, adjacent to it, or where national interests in wild land and nature conservation are at stake.

Our policy on commenting on or objecting to planning applications

1. Applications on John Muir Trust land

The Trust will **object to** any planning application on land it owns or manages, unless the development:

- Directly supports the Trust's objectives for ecological restoration, climate resilience, or public access, **and**
- Has been developed in full consultation with the Trust, statutory agencies, and local stakeholders, **and**
- Complies with relevant environmental and planning legislation.

Where these criteria are not met, the Trust will submit a formal objection.

2. Applications directly adjacent to Trust land

The Trust will **consider commenting on or objecting to** applications directly adjacent to our land **only** where:

- The development would have a significant and unacceptable impact on the wild places, biodiversity, landscape character, or public enjoyment of the Trust's land.
- There is a risk that it would constrain or undermine our ability to deliver conservation and land management objectives.

Engagement in such cases will be selective and proportionate to the likely impact.

3. Applications elsewhere

The Trust will **not routinely comment** on planning applications off our land or beyond its immediate boundary.

However, we **may object or comment** where:

- A statutory consultee (e.g. NatureScot, SEPA, Historic Environment Scotland) has lodged an objection on grounds aligned with the Trust's mission (e.g. wild land, designated sites, or biodiversity impacts), **and**
- The proposed development is of national significance for wild places, climate or ecological integrity (e.g. within but not exclusively Wild Land Area, National Scenic Area, or other protected landscape).

In such cases, we will assess whether the Trust's involvement would add meaningful weight to the planning outcome or to public understanding of wild land impacts.

4. Discretionary engagement

The Trust reserves the right to engage in other planning matters **only in circumstances**, where:

- A proposal poses a nationally significant and unacceptable risk to wild places or sets a damaging precedent for wild places.
- We are requested to support a statutory consultee or community group where there is a compelling alignment with our values and mission.
- Resources are available to engage meaningfully.

5. Process and governance

Decisions to engage in planning cases will be taken by the Policy team, in consultation with relevant land, conservation, and legal colleagues. Consideration will be given to:

- Proximity to Trust land
- Potential ecological, landscape and visual impact
- The stance of statutory consultees
- Strategic fit with the Trust's priorities and capacity to respond

High-profile or precedent-setting cases will be referred to senior leadership and/or the Board for approval.