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Contact: Martin Hicks
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Date: 09/07/2025

Dear Spatial Planning Team

RE: Additional Documents Technical Consultation July 2025

ECOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Overall Recommendation:

No objections to the proposals for sites previously subject to National Landscape considerations.

Comments:

1. Thank you for consulting this office on the above regarding the Local Plan. The only topic I consider to be relevant in respect of direct consequences for ecology is that concerning the Chilterns National Landscapes, for which I have noted the SADC report on this. The halting of the NL boundary amendments will have consequences for four original site allocations, all of which were to be removed from the plan due to the proposed changes. Three - M14, M24 and M26 - are now going to be included again given the reason for removal is no longer present.
2. The replacement of sites M14, M24 and M26 back into the local plan site allocations will have locally damaging impacts on these site's existing ecology if adopted, although only at the site level. They all support habitats including grassland and woodland, although none have any recognised statutory or non-statutory status. Some are already subject to disturbance.
3. As part of our previous review of sites for the Local Plan, we did not identify any apparent fundamental ecological constraints to development of these sites, based on currently available information. There is no reason to change this view. However, local habitats of value should be maintained where possible within these sites, taking into account their relative locations and sensitivities – M26 abuts the river corridor of the Lea.

4. If adopted, any development on these sites will now be subject to mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain, for which appropriate compensation and enhancements for impacts would be secured.

5. Site M12 is locally valuable at the site level, consisting of a large rough grass field and block of woodland, although the latter is secondary and recent, not present in the early 1970s or previously. Otherwise, there is no knowledge of any specific ecological value associated with this site. We have no objection to the continued exclusion of this site from the local plan which would benefit its ecology if managed appropriately and / or enhanced accordingly, but this is wholly a matter for the landowner.

I trust these comments are of assistance to the Plan Inquiry,

Regards,

Martin Hicks MCIEEM
Senior Ecology Officer Hertfordshire LEADS

Hertfordshire LEADS provides Landscape, Ecology, Archaeology, Design and Sustainability support to planning departments in Hertfordshire.