

St Albans Local Plan Examination 2025**Chilterns National Landscape expansion update – June 2025****Statement on behalf of Jarvis Homes (rep ID 205)**

1. This note has been prepared on behalf of Jarvis Homes, who are promoting land at Beesonend Lane, Harpenden for residential development. However, this note relates to a methodological issue in the Council's site selection process rather than to any site specifically.
2. A total of four sites were excluded between Regulation 18 and 19 stage due to a possible future extension to the Chilterns National Landscape. The Council's Site Selection document LPSS 02.13 lists four sites as "not recommended to progress". These sites are listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: sites excluded at Regulation 19 stage due to potential National Landscape extension

Site Ref.	HELAA Ref.	Site Address	Reg 18 ref.	Capacity
C-262	WH-10-18	North of The Slype, Gustard Wood, AL4 8SA	M12	49
C-255	WH-03-21	South of Codicote Road, AL4 8GD	M24	12
C-278	WH-22-17	Highway Chipping Depot, Lower Luton Road, AL4 8JJ	M26	7
C-049	HT-03-21	Land at Beesonend Lane, Harpenden, AL5 2AB	M14	43

3. The qualitative assessment of these four sites contained the same phrase:

"Technical work undertaken by Natural England, regarding the characteristics of land that meets their criteria for an extension to the Chilterns National Landscape into St Albans City & District, includes this site. This site is not recommended to progress."

4. However, an email received from the Chilterns Boundary Review Project Team at Natural England on 9 May 2025 confirms that the previously proposed extension to the Chilterns National Landscape is not proceeding. Work is being stopped. This email is included as Appendix 1 to this statement.
5. Our Regulation 19 representations for Jarvis Homes highlighted the inappropriateness of making changes to an emerging Local Plan on the basis of "possible" future changes to the National Landscape. We highlighted that extensions had been proposed before but not progressed and that there was a risk the same could happen again. That is what has transpired.
6. There remains nothing in the public domain to indicate which parts of the district were to be included within the expanded National Landscape. All we have is the Council's site assessment proformas indicating that four proposed sites were within that expanded area.
7. It seems clear that the Council's decision to exclude sites based on the possible expansion of the Chilterns National Landscape is not sound and needs to be revisited.
8. DLA Town Planning has not commented on the first three sites listed in Table 1 above and can offer no comment on their suitability, beyond the National Landscape expansion point.

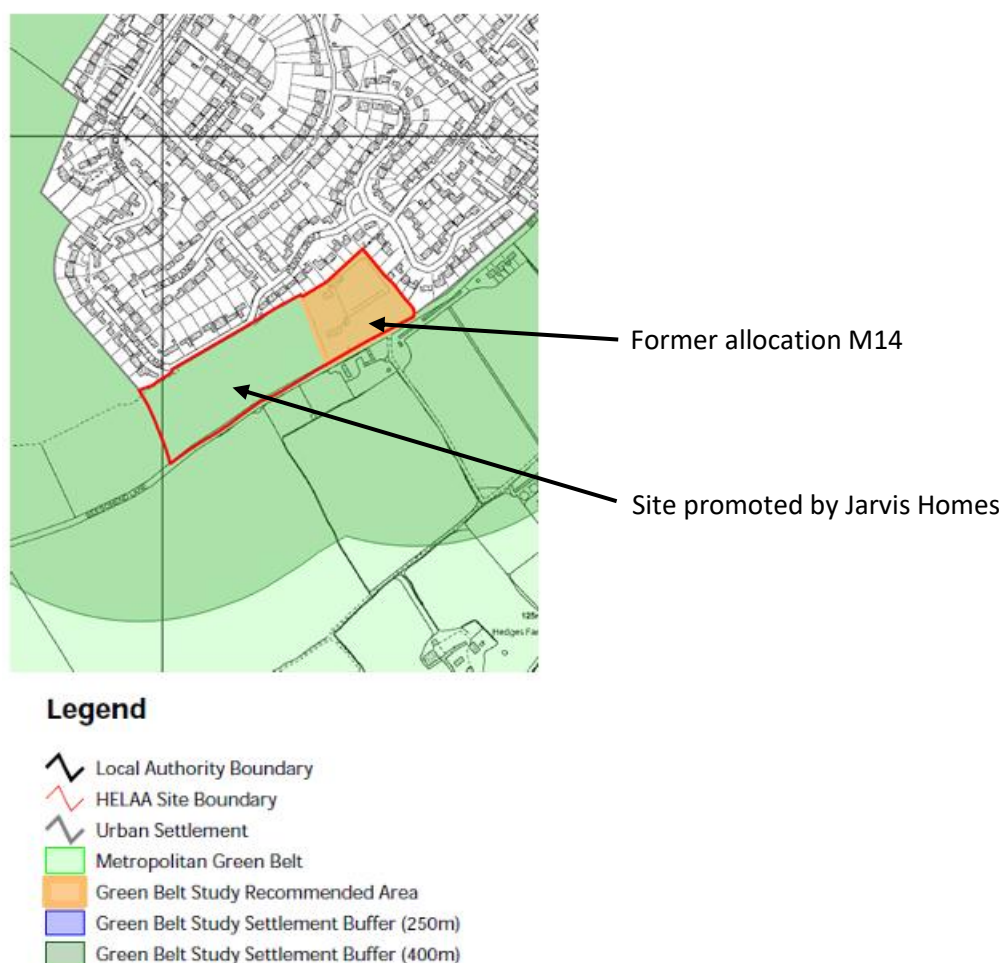
9. However, the fourth site – Land at Beesonend Lane, Harpenden – is considered suitable as a proposed housing allocation. It was recommended for release in the Council’s Green Belt Review and was proposed as a housing allocation in the Regulation 18 draft Plan. It was only deleted at Regulation 19 stage because of the possible National Landscape expansion, on which work has now stopped. The Beesonend Lane site, formerly known as allocation M14, should be reinstated for around 43 homes.
10. Site M14 is highlighted in a buff colour in Figure 1 below. The site being promoted by Jarvis Homes is adjacent to site M14 but for the Council’s assessment was outlined in red. The site outlined in red was recommended in the SKM Green Belt Review of 2013. Our Regulation 19 representations highlighted flaws in the Green Belt Review’s definition of parcels that led to this site being excluded while the adjacent site was taken forward.

Summary

11. Circumstances have changed since the Regulation 19 Plan and the exclusion of sites based on a possible expansion of the National Landscape cannot be justified. Reincluding the four excluded sites would add around 100 new homes to the overall supply. Adding in the site being promoted Jarvis Homes would add a further 100 new homes.

Figure 1: annotated extract from LPSS 02.13

Green Belt Settlement Buffer Map



Appendix 1 – email communication from Natural England

From: "SM-NE-ChilternsAONBboundaryreview (NE)"

<ChilternsAONBboundaryreview@naturalengland.org.uk>

Date: 9 May 2025 at 16:13:05 BST

To: [XXXXXXX](#)

Subject: **UPDATE on Natural England's Landscape Designation Programme**

Date: 9th May 2025

By email only:



Mail Hub , Natural
England, Foss
House, Kings
Pool, 1-2
Peasholme
Green, York, YO1
7PX

UPDATE on Natural England's Landscape Designation Programme

Dear Stakeholder

I am writing to you with an update regarding Natural England's programme of landscape designation, which has included two new potential National Landscapes in the Yorkshire Wolds and Cheshire Sandstone Ridge, and two extensions to existing National Landscapes (NL), in the Surrey Hills and Chilterns.

Defra and Natural England are having to work to very tight budget settlements. Our work has been considered by Ministers, the department and ourselves and consequently we have had to make some very difficult funding decisions across our programmes. The funding for landscape designations work is, as a result, limited and we have had to make hard choices around which landscape designations projects to continue and which to stop.

Natural England have prioritised the two designation projects already at advanced stages, having completed public consultations and technical assessments – the Yorkshire Wolds new NL and the extension to the Surrey Hills NL. Sadly, this means stopping work on the Chilterns boundary extension project, and the potential new NL in Cheshire. These projects had not yet reached the stage of sharing proposed areas for public and statutory consultation.

I wanted to acknowledge how disappointing this decision may be for you, your colleagues and partners. Please know that we are disappointed at having to make such a difficult decision. We

will consider any future landscape designations work in line with our strategic direction in due course. We are hoping the evidence base which has been collated as part of these projects can be shared in due course to inform other projects.

We intend to share a list of Frequently Asked Questions in the near future to provide more information about this decision so will be in touch again shortly. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you or members of your team have any questions or would like to discuss this further. For queries, please use this mailbox: landscapedesignations@naturalengland.org.uk.

We are committed to maintaining transparent communication and are here to provide any additional information you may need.

We wanted to provide this update as we value the close working relationship we have as partners with your organisation. Thank you for your understanding and continued support. As an organisation we are committed to recovering nature for growth, health and security.

Yours Sincerely,

The Chilterns Boundary Review Project Team

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