

## ED119 Email from Natural England to Programme Officer

From: "Melvin, Jamie (NE)"

Subject: FW: North Hertfordshire Local Plan / Natural England - SoCG response

Date: 18 February 2018 at 22:47:36 GMT

To: Louise St John Howe <louise@poservices.co.uk>

Dear Louise,

Natural England has been made aware that some concerns have been raised regarding our statement of common ground with North Hertfordshire District Council regarding their submitted local plan particularly relating to paragraph 4.10 which reads as follows:

*“4.10 It is agreed that the sites to the East of Luton (SP19) do not have a material impact on the AONB (or its setting) as confirmed by the landscape assessments accompanying the planning applications in this area. The SA/SEA (and associated landscape assessment) however state that the allocations can only accommodate small scale development, with respect to non-AONB landscapes of high value.”*

We have been informed that the statement that the sites in question will not have a material impact on the AONB has been interpreted as advice. That is perhaps fair given the wording but was not the intention of Natural England. We chose not to contest the above statement as we lack the site specific knowledge and resources to do so and consider that the AONB board is in a far better position to comment. We have given this particular matter very little consideration and therefore our opinion should carry no weight. The advice we gave in response to the pre-submission plan (i.e. ‘We also advise that you consult the Chilterns Conservation Board and that appropriate weight is given to their submission. Their knowledge of the site and its wider landscape setting, together with the aims and objectives of the AONB’s statutory management plan will be valuable in assessing the

appropriateness of this location for this allocation.’) remains highly relevant in this case.

If you think that we need to amend our statement of common ground and possibility to do so remains please would you let me know as soon as possible.

Regarding the second paragraph, Natural England’s desk based interpretation of the documents provided relating to the sites east of Luton was that the site was not suitable for a large scale urban development and that there was no evidence to support this allocation in landscape terms. No further information has been submitted to us regarding this allocation since our letter of the 30<sup>th</sup> November 2016 and for that reason our position remains essentially unchanged. I hope that helps to clarify Natural England’s position let me know if there is anything further that you require of us?

Kind regards,

Jamie Melvin  
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