CHELMSFORD LOCAL PLAN REVIEW 2022-2041 EXAMINATION

HEARING STATEMENT - Matter 10
Protecting Important Assets - Natural Environment and Biodiversity

Representor	Mr Rian Wispy
Representor number	1372718
Original Regulation 19 responses	PSQ25-3958 and PSQ25-88 (Site 16A); PSQ25-3960 and PSQ25-89 (Site 16B)
Matter	Matter 10 - Protecting Important Assets - Natural Environment and Biodiversity
Participation	Written representations only - not attending the hearing sessions

1. Scope and relationship to original representations

This statement supplements, and should be read together with, my duly made Regulation 19 representations concerning Sites 16A and 16B. Those representations raised environmental impacts, biodiversity and ecological considerations, infrastructure, development impacts and the adequacy and effectiveness of safeguards within the Local Plan. This statement does not withdraw or replace those representations and is confined to the Inspectors' questions that engage those existing concerns.

MIQs 10.10-10.16 - natural environment, green/blue infrastructure, BNG and ecology

The natural-environment framework should be effective when applied to strategic development. Ecological assessment must occur at a stage when its findings can still influence scale, layout and phasing.

Biodiversity net gain should complement, not replace, the mitigation hierarchy. Avoidance of harm should be considered before mitigation, compensation or BNG. For the garden community, the 20% BNG requirement should be clear as to whether it is a minimum or target and should be demonstrably deliverable.

Long-term habitat creation, green infrastructure and ecological mitigation require clear stewardship, monitoring and remedial arrangements.

MIQs 10.17-10.20 - trees, woodland and landscape features

Where Sites 16A and 16B affect landscape features, the policy framework should be sufficiently clear to secure appropriate tree, woodland and landscape protection and enhancement and to define when off-site measures are acceptable.

Modifications / outcome sought

- Require ecological constraints to be assessed early enough to influence development.
- Apply the mitigation hierarchy before reliance on compensation or BNG.
- Clarify and secure the garden-community BNG requirement, long-term management and monitoring.
- Ensure habitat, protected-species, tree and landscape measures are secured before the affected phase proceeds.

Conclusion

The purpose of these changes is to ensure that the Plan is effective in practice: environmental and development impacts must be assessed at the appropriate stage, necessary safeguards and mitigation must be secured, and development must remain aligned with infrastructure and environmental capacity actually available.