HS046

Land South of Ford End Primary School
Hearing Statement prepared on behalf of Dandara Eastern
October 2026

BIDWELLS

CHELMSFORD LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION: HEARING STATEMENT PREPARED ON BEHALF OF DANDARA EASTERN (REPRESENTATION NUMBER: 1326599)

MATTER 4 ISSUE 1

Quality Assurance

Site name:	Land South of Ford End Primary School
Client name:	Dandara Eastern
Type of report:	Hearing Statement
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Signed	
Date	20 October 2026
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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Hearing Statement has been prepared by Bidwells on behalf of Dandara Eastern in support of Land South of Ford End Primary School (Growth Site 14b – thereafter "the site"). Dandara Eastern has promoted the site through representations submitted at each of the previous Local Plan consultation stages. They control the whole site demarcated by the red line boundary plan contained in the Regulation 19 representations (Additional Sites)[1].

1.2 The purpose of Dandara Eastern's involvement in the Examination process is to demonstrate the availability and deliverability of Growth Site Policy 14b, Land South of Ford End Primary School, and to respond to the Matter 4 questions. These comments are based on the Regulation 19 representations under Comment ID: **PSQ25-6297** (Policies S9, S10, S16).

1.3 This Hearing Statement responds to:

- Matter 4: Infrastructure and Transport
  - Issue 1: Whether the planned infrastructure aligns with the planned housing and economic growth
    - Questions 4.4 and 4.5

[1] Bidwells Regulation 19 Local Plan Representations (January 2026): Appendix 1, Page 8

Response to Matter 4, Issue 1

Question 4.4: Does the Infrastructure Delivery Plan March 2025 (INFO12) contain the full range of infrastructure to support planned growth and how will it be kept up to date?

1.4 The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) identifies a range of infrastructure requirements associated with Growth Site 14b, including education contributions, off-road school parking, open space, healthcare, recreation and community provision. The updated IDP schedule (October 2026) provides further clarity regarding the infrastructure anticipated to support the development, particularly around the delivery of the community facility. However, not all requirements are currently costed and the IDP therefore does not provide a complete account of the infrastructure costs associated with the site.

1.5 In particular, the updated IDP identifies the provision of off-road school parking as an essential site-specific requirement to be secured through a Section 106 obligation, with the cost to be met by the developer. However, no estimated cost is provided. The scale, location and specification of the parking provision also remain to be determined through the Planning Brief and planning application process.

1.6 The delivery of community provision has also been amended. The previous estimated cost of £1.3 million for a new community building has been removed and replaced with a contribution towards the provision of a new community/village hall, the amount of which is recorded as “TBC”. The requirement therefore remains within the IDP, but its cost and funding arrangements are not currently quantified.

1.7 The amended Statement of Common Ground provides further context. It recognises that the appropriate solution could comprise the enhancement or replacement of the existing village hall or, alternatively, the provision of a new facility, with the precise specification to be considered through the Planning Brief process. It also records that any requirement for a new community building must be subject to local support for its delivery and a commitment to its future management.

1.8 Dandara supports this more flexible approach. However, there is uncertainty surrounding the community facility provision given the developer does not know what value will be attributed to this contribution, and this could in turn impact on the viability of the site.

1.9 The IDP also does not identify a specific cost for any speed management measures on the B1008 that have been identified as necessary to support the development. If such measures are expected to be funded or delivered by Growth Site 14b, they should be expressly identified within the schedule, together with their anticipated cost and delivery mechanism.

1.10 It is acknowledged that the IDP will require periodic review as further information becomes available. The document confirms that infrastructure requirements, costs and delivery arrangements will continue to evolve and that updates may be required through the Examination process and as the Local Plan progresses. It also recommends that the IDP be reviewed at least every five years. Further updates will be required to the IDP in relation to Growth Site 14b once

the Planning Brief has been completed and the outstanding infrastructure requirements have been established. Subject to these matters being resolved, Dandara is satisfied that the necessary infrastructure can be provided.

Question 4.5: Do the costs and funding/delivery sources in the Infrastructure Delivery Schedules (INFO12 Appendix A) align with those of key service and infrastructure providers?

1.11 The April 2026 Local Plan Viability Update Note (V003) recognises that development viability has worsened since the original viability assessment was undertaken in 2023. Chapter 4 identifies that build costs have increased by approximately 11% between March 2023 and April 2026. In comparison, the average price of new build housing has only increased by around 3.6% (Table 3.3). V003 also identifies wider uncertainty in the housing market. Paragraphs 3.16 to 3.23 predict a low growth forecast.

1.12 Development costs have also increased through the introduction of mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain. Additionally, indexation on CIL, which is based on BCIS All-in Tender Price Index, is a reflection of build costs, and so will also have increased proportionately more than housing price growth over the same period since the initial viability assessment was undertaken.

1.13 The updated IDP (October 2026) identifies a developer cost of £22,733 per dwelling for Growth Site 14b, based on an allocation of 75 dwellings. This excludes the cost of any community hall provision contribution, which remains to be determined. It also excludes any cost associated with the provision of off-road school staff parking, notwithstanding that the schedule identifies that provision as an essential requirement to be met by the developer. The IDP also excludes the required traffic-calming measures on the B1008.The absence of those costs creates further uncertainty as to whether the £22,733 per dwelling figure represents the full infrastructure burden associated with the allocation.

1.14 The April 2026 Local Plan Viability Update Note confirms that the Council's viability testing applies a typical Section 106 allowance of £20,000 per dwelling to non-strategic development typologies. This is an 'all-in' cost including RAMS/SSSI mitigation and education contributions and is applied in addition to Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). This figure contrasts with the IDP, which identifies a total developer cost of £22,733 per dwelling for the site, creating uncertainty regarding the costs required and in turn questions the viability of the development. The site-specific schedules in the IDP frequently identify costs above the £20,000 per-dwelling allowance. Of the 27 allocations listed, 17 (63%) identify developer costs exceeding £20,000 per dwelling. The £20,000 assumption used in V003 therefore does not appear to reflect the site-specific infrastructure costs identified for the majority of allocations.

1.15 There also remains uncertainty regarding the relationship between CIL and Section 106 funding. A number of items in the IDP are identified as potentially being delivered through CIL, Section 106 obligations, or a combination of both. The April 2026 Viability Update Note makes clear that the £20,000 per dwelling Section 106 assumption is additional to CIL. By contrast, the IDP does not clearly distinguish which elements of the stated £22,733 per dwelling cost would be secured through Section 106 and which are expected to be funded, wholly or partly, through CIL. The IDP and viability assessment should be capable of being cross referenced to work together if they are to provide a robust and justified evidence base, however there would appear to be discrepancies in relation to the allowances, justification and sources of funding.

1.16 Dandara does not dispute the need for appropriate infrastructure to support the allocation. However, the Council should confirm the costs identified in the IDP in comparison to the £20,000 per dwelling plus CIL assumption used in its April 2026 viability update note. In particular, the Council should confirm the amount and basis of any community provision contribution and quantify the costs associated with Ford End Primary School staff parking and the B1008 traffic-calming measures.

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