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Mrs Annette Feeney
Programme Officer
Chelmsford Local Plan Review 2022 – 2041
By email: Annette.Feeney@Chelmsford.gov.uk

Dear Mrs Feeney,

Date: 20th October 2026

RE: **Hearing Statement – Submitted by Bellway Homes Limited (Essex)**

Introduction

Bellway Homes Limited (Essex) – hereinafter "Bellway" – controls the site known as Land West of Patching Hall Lane (Strategic Growth Site Policy 19).

Bellway Homes is one of the largest housing developers in the United Kingdom. Bellway has a strong track record of delivering high-quality new developments across the Essex region, including within the administrative area of Chelmsford City Council. Many of these sites form part of the strategic allocations in the currently adopted Local Plan. For example, Bellway are the lead developer at Moulsham Hall in Great Leighs (Strategic Growth Site 7A) and worked successfully with the Council to achieve Resolution to Grant in March 2025 for up to 750 homes. Bellway obtained a resolution to Grant for 105 homes at Strategic Growth Site 7C in June 2025 and have also delivered phases of development at Beaulieu and Channels.

On behalf of the landowners, Bellway has promoted Land West of Patching Hall Lane (the site) for allocation in the Chelmsford Local Plan for a number of years. The most recent representations Bellway submitted were in January 2026 in response to the Regulation 19 Consultation (Chelmsford Local Plan Additional Sites)[Comment ID: PSQ25-6388].

In April 2026, following the publication of the Regulation 19 Plan (Focussed Consultation Additional Sites) which identified the site as a draft allocation, Bellway and the Council drafted and agreed a Statement of Common Ground [**SOCG044**] in respect of the site's draft allocation, which we trust will assist the Inspectors conducting the Local Plan Examination.

Bellway wishes to attend the Examination in Public during Week 2 when Matter 6: Site Selection and Growth Area 1 – Central and Urban Chelmsford is considered. Bellway will participate, as required, in order to assist the Examination Inspectors in their consideration of Strategic Growth Site 19.

Bellway Homes are a Member of the Home Builders Federation (HBF), the representative body for the home building industry in England and Wales. Bellway Homes are aware of the HBF's representations made on behalf of its Members to the Local Plan and Examination and does not seek to replicate those matters raised in this statement.

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Bellway Homes Limited is a member of the Bellway p.l.c. Group of Companies

Bellway Response to Matters, Issues and Questions

We understand that in this Hearing Statement, the Inspectors are seeking responses to the following questions that were set out within the Matters, Issues and Questions document.

6.3 What is the current planning status of the site (e.g. masterplans, permissions, completions)? Have there been any changes since the Plan was submitted for examination and if so, are any modifications needed?

The site has no formal planning status beyond its draft allocation within the Regulation 19 and submission version of the Plan. There have been no changes to the site since the Local Plan was submitted for examination, therefore, no modifications are needed. Whilst there is an adopted Broomfield Neighbourhood Plan [March 2025], the site is identified by the Parish Council in the NP as suitable for development (site BNP5).

6.4 For the housing sites, what is the basis for the proposed capacity?

The site has previously been assessed for its suitability by the Council in 2017, 2018, 2023 and 2024, following various submissions made by Bellway to the Council (Local Plan consultations, Call for Sites submissions etc.). Within the Council's 2024 Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment, the Council stated that the site could accommodate an indicative quantum of 217 dwellings.

Consistent with these findings, Bellway has always maintained in its representations to the Council that the site has capacity to deliver in the region of 200 homes. This has been informed by Bellway's own illustrative Masterplan, technical studies and assessments. For example, as part of its due diligence, Bellway has undertaken assessments on various planning matters that typically influence a site's development capacity including flood risk, landscape impact and heritage assessment. In 2026, Bellway's appointed Transport Consultant undertook a transport assessment scoping exercise with Essex County Council Highways Authority.

6.5 For the sites which include non-residential uses, what is the basis for the scale and type/mix of employment and other uses proposed? Is it justified?

Not Applicable.

6.6 Are the development requirements clear, and are any further safeguards or mitigation measures necessary to achieve an acceptable form of development?

Bellway has previously sought clarification from the Council in response to the draft policy text which under the heading 'Design and Layout' states *"Provide a coherent network of public open space, formal and informal sport, recreation and community space within the site".* Within its response to the Regulation 19 (Focussed Consultation Additional Sites) Bellway advised the Council;

> *"Whilst we are supportive of the requirement to include public open space for recreation and the community's usage (including child play space), we question whether it is necessary and appropriate for the Site, particularly given its size, to be required to deliver on-site provision of formal sporting facilities. The site is in close proximity to a number of formal sports and recreational facilities including; c.220m from Andrews Park, which contains a sizable recreation area, including pitches basketball court, and tennis court. c.500m from Chelmsford Sport and Athletics Centre / Melbourne Park."*

Within the recent Statement of Common Ground signed by both parties, the Council confirmed that:

> *"The policy is considered to be flexible to address sport, leisure and recreation needs which may be provided on-site, and/or off-site via financial contributions, depending on scale and need. Strategic Policy S10 of the Pre-Submission Local Plan and the latest Planning Obligations SPD set this out in more detail and the precise needs can be considered through the masterplan and planning application process"*

Bellway are supportive of the Master planning process and agree that the need to accommodate formal sports and recreational facilities on-site can be assessed as part of this process.

6.7 What is the expected timescale and rate of development for the housing sites and is this realistic?

Bellway has previously confirmed to the Council that the housing trajectory contained within the Local Plan, which anticipates that the site will deliver homes from 2028/29, with delivery of the first 100 houses (50 houses per year) in the fourth and fifth years of the Plan period following adoption (2028/29 – 2029/30), is considered an achievable and realistic rate of delivery for both market and affordable homes. In particular, Bellway notes this site does not rely on any major infrastructure being required, such as new school provision.

Bellway have entered pre-application discussions with Chelmsford City Council. Bellway have commenced work on the Masterplan with a view to undertaking public consultation in Q1 2027 and to submit a full application following the formal endorsement of the Masterplan. We anticipate securing full permission in 2027 and to commence development in late 2027 / early 2028.

6.8 Are any modifications to the site policy needed for soundness?

None.

Location 19 – Land West of Patching Hall Lane - Strategic Growth Site Policy 19
What is the likely impact of the proposed allocation on the following factors:

- ***a) Rural landscape character, agricultural land and heritage assets***
- ***b) Biodiversity and green infrastructure,***
- ***c) The strategic and local highway network***
- ***d) Other infrastructure including public transport, education, health, utilities and recreation;***
- ***e) Flood risk and prevention***
- ***f) Air quality, light and noise pollution***

(a) In terms of its rural landscape character, the site has undergone assessment as part of recent borough housing land assessments. A Landscape Sensitivity & Capacity Study was undertaken as part of this process and judges the site to have low overall landscape sensitivity, moderate overall visual sensitivity and a moderate value. Recommendations from this assessment include retaining or reinstating boundary hedgerows, implementing green buffers to minimise impact on views, strengthen landscape character to the north, maintain the existing PRoW and formalise informal access within the site. These are all matters that will inform and are capable of being incorporated into the Masterplan.

Bellway has undertaken its own Landscape and Visual Assessment which concludes that overall, the site has relatively few landscape and visual constraints to development within the site and that there is capacity to receive well-considered residential development without unacceptable impacts upon the character and appearance of the area.

The site is located adjacent to the northern built-up area of Chelmsford, in an area that has experienced planned growth, including over the past decade. Of most relevance, the site is positioned between two recent developments: Copperfield Place to the west and Emberson Croft to the east. To the north of the site lies open countryside beyond the boundary of Chelmsford. Therefore, the site's development represents a logical form of 'infilling' between the existing urban area. As such, the development of the site would not result in a sense of the urban development encroaching into the countryside.

In terms of agricultural land, Chelmsford City Council's Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELLA) [Spring 2026] uses Natural England's Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) framework to assess soil quality. The Council's March 2026 assessment details that the Site is predominantly Greenfield and primarily within the land classification/s: Grade 1, Grade 2 or Grade 3. There is a strong planning justification for the loss of BMV agricultural land in order to address the acute need for housing in Chelmsford in sustainable locations, particularly within the top tier settlement of Chelmsford City. The site forms a logical extension to the settlement and as detailed below, follows similar releases for housing undertaken in relation to previous iterations of the Local Plan.

In terms of heritage assets, Bellway's design feasibility work recognises and responds to the presence of designated heritage assets within proximity to the site. These include the Broomfield Conservation Area (CA) which lies approximately 1km north-east of the site. There is no intervisibility between the site and the CA due to the nature of the local topography and intervening buildings, vegetation and trees. There are two Listed buildings which lie within the immediate context of the site. The nearest Listed feature (141-145, Patching Hall Lane) sits approximately 30m south-east of the site which has some intervisibility with the eastern section of the site and the other (Priors) 200m north-west of the site. Bellway notes that the draft allocation policy requires a design response which preserves and where appropriate enhances the settings of these assets, in accordance with national planning policy. There is sufficient scope to do so. It should also be noted that, Bellway controls additional land to the north of the allocated land, which could be used to help reduce or mitigate impacts on heritage assets.

(b) In terms of biodiversity and green infrastructure, there are no known ecological constraints that would prevent the site's successful development, in accordance with the recognised approaches to consideration of ecological matters, as required by local and national planning policy. The feasibility work that Bellway have undertaken demonstrates that a substantial network of green infrastructure can be accommodated within the site, including areas of formal and informal amenity space, areas of ecological enhancement, alongside provision of drainage basins and maintaining of existing PRoW routes etc. It should also be noted that, as previously communicated to the Council, Bellway controls additional land to the north of the allocated land, which could be used to address any additional green infrastructure requirements, should this be necessary following detailed design and assessment.

(c) In terms of the highway network, the site is in walking distance of existing bus stops on Oliver Way, Patching Hall Lane and Woodhall Road. These serve bus routes 676 and the C2 Chelmsford Shuttles. The C2 is a frequent route, buses operate roughly every 20 minutes throughout the day, connecting the site to Broomfield Hospital, Melbourne and Chelmsford City Centre & train station. Bus services run from approximately 05:32 to 23:10. Patching Hall Lane has had the benefit of traffic calming, which makes it an attractive route for cyclists and pedestrians.

Bellway have undertaken a transport assessment scoping exercise with Essex County Council Highways Authority. This has not identified any significant highway challenges in relation to this site, and it is anticipated that additional trip generation resulting from the site's development can be accommodated on the local highway network. Bellway notes the draft allocation policy requirements in this regard under the heading 'Site Infrastructure Requirements'.

(d) In terms of other infrastructure (e.g. public transport, education, health, utilities and recreation) Bellway considers that where mitigation may be necessary to make the development acceptable, there

are adequate mechanisms available to the Council (e.g. S106 and CIL) to secure this either in kind or as funding. Bellway notes that the Council is a CIL charging authority and beyond the requirements listed in the draft allocation policy, has also published a Planning Obligations SPD, alongside the Essex County Council 'Developer's Guide to Infrastructure Contributions' document.

(e) In terms of flood risk and prevention, the site is located entirely within EA Flood Zone 1, indicating the lowest probability of flooding from fluvial or tidal sources. Bellway's design feasibility work has identified requirements for a surface water drainage strategy, including drainage basins, and these can be accommodated successfully within the site's residential layout.

(f) In terms of resulting impacts on air quality, the site is not within an Air Quality Management Area. Indeed, Chelmsford City Council formally revoked its two previous AQMAs in March 2024 after monitoring data showed long-term reductions in nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) emissions that consistently met national air quality objectives.

In terms of light pollution, careful consideration will be given to lighting design to minimise light pollution and to have regard to advice from ecologists. In terms of noise pollution, the site bounds on to either established residential areas or farmland. It is not considered that the development would be incompatible or have an undue impact. Any impacts are likely to be able to be addressed via the scheme's design, or via appropriate forms of mitigation, as required by planning policy.

Bellway confirms that it will be submitting a Screening Opinion Request under the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations to the Council in advance of any planning submission in order to screen the development's likely impacts and agree any forms of mitigation necessary.

Additionally, in relation to all the matters described above, Bellway confirms that as part of pre-application discussions with the Council, it is preparing a Masterplan to guide the site's development as required by the Council's Local Plan requirement for all allocated sites. Bellway submits that through this process, it will discuss and agree with the Council any necessary approaches or specific forms of mitigation required to make the development acceptable in planning terms.

What mitigation measures would be necessary to ensure a sustainable form of development, and are they clearly set out?

Bellway submits that the mitigation measures necessary to ensure a sustainable form of development are set out clearly within the wording of the site allocation policy, and these mitigation measures will be addressed in the appropriate level of detail as part of pre-application discussions relating to the site's development, and this will also be informed via the requirement for a Masterplan to be provided. This process will involve responses from various consultees, in advance of any planning application submission.

What are the main infrastructure requirements for the site, how were they identified, and how and when will they be delivered?

Bellway submits that the main infrastructure requirements are appropriately identified beneath the heading '*Site infrastructure requirements'* within the draft site allocation policy wording. We are aware that the Council has also undertaken its own Integrated Impact Assessment. In relation to the site this has not identified any significant adverse effects which would require the provision of additional infrastructure beyond the items identified within the site allocation policy text.

Conclusion

In summary Bellway Homes Limited (Essex) support the Council's preparation of a Local Plan Review to ensure that there is an up-to-date development plan to deliver the housing and employment growth together with the necessary supporting infrastructure.

Bellway agrees with the Council that Land West of Patching Hall Lane is a sustainable location for site allocation. Its development would represent a positive and logical extension to the existing settlement boundary to the north of Chelmsford. Therefore, Bellway supports the site's allocation and looks forward to confirmation of the site allocation following the Examination.

This Hearing Statement confirms the site is available and deliverable. The site can help facilitate the future growth of Chelmsford by delivering around 200 new housing units within the early part of the plan period and can make a significant and positive contribution towards addressing Chelmsford's housing need.

Bellway remains committed to working with the Council to deliver high-quality development within the Chelmsford area. Bellway will attend the Examination in Public in order to assist the Inspectors and the Council as might be required in their consideration of Strategic Growth Site 19 Land West of Patching Hall Lane.

Yours sincerely,

David Moseley
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