HS063

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

BIDWELLS

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

MATTER 6
ISSUE 1 & SITE SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

Quality Assurance

Site name:	Land South of Ford End Primary School
Client name:	Dandara Eastern
Type of report:	Hearing Statement
Prepared by:	Erin Harcombe
Signed	
Date	20 October 2026
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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 (hereafter "the site"), which is proposed for allocation as Growth Site Policy 14b. Dandara 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 submitted 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 site-specific questions. These comments are based on the Regulation 19 representations under Comment ID's: **PSQ25-6297** and **AS-1139** (site specific).

1.3 This Hearing Statement responds to:

- Matter 6: Site Selection
  - Issue 1: Site Allocations
    - Questions 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.7, 6.8
  - Site Specific Questions: Growth Area 2 – North Chelmsford
    - Location 14 – Ford End – Growth Site Policy 14b – Questions w, x, y and z

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

2.0 Response to Matter 6, Issue 1

Question 6.2: Is the approach of requiring masterplans/planning briefs an effective mechanism to secure sustainable development across the plan area?

2.1 Yes, Dandara supports the preparation of proportionate masterplans and planning briefs as a means of coordinating the delivery of sustainable development. In relation to Growth Site 14b, the Planning Brief process commenced in December 2025 and is now well advanced, enabling Dandara and the Council to reach agreement around the scale of development, developable area and infrastructure requirements including traffic calming measures, green space, drainage and community provision. The process has progressed iteratively and the Planning Brief is close to agreement.

Question 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?

2.2 The site does not currently benefit from planning permission and no development has commenced. Dandara is actively progressing the Planning Brief and masterplanning process. An application is expected to be submitted in 2027, with development intended to commence in 2028.

2.3 Ongoing work on the site has tested its capacity against the identified constraints and infrastructure requirements. This indicates that the site may be capable of accommodating approximately 90 dwellings, compared with the draft allocation figure of 75 dwellings.

2.4 The approach to the community provision has also evolved since the Plan was submitted for examination. The draft policy currently requires a new community/village hall to be provided on-site. Discussions with the Council and the subsequent updated Statement of Common Ground have resulted in a more flexible approach under which the requirement could be met through a financial contribution.

2.5 The area identified for school car parking provision also requires a degree of flexibility to enable the car park to be delivered efficiently and having regard to the school's evidenced operational requirements, without the sterilisation of additional land that is not needed. Modifications are therefore required to Growth Site Policy 14b to allow flexibility in the form of community provision and the scale and location of the school parking. This is discussed further in relation to Question 6.8.

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

2.6 The proposed capacity of approximately 75 dwellings was established prior to the completion of the masterplanning process. Through the masterplanning process it has become evident that

there is scope for an increased number of homes onsite, given the overall size of the site and the constraints and opportunities that exist. The development can accommodate in the region of 90 homes (subject to mix) within the indicative developable area accounting for the onsite infrastructure, green space and providing the links between Main Road and Pleshey Road to create a more coherent, proportionate development scheme.

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

2.7 Growth Site 14b is a smaller site which is available, suitable and capable of early delivery. Dandara controls the whole of the allocated site and is actively progressing the Planning Brief and masterplanning process. There are therefore no known land assembly or ownership constraints that would prevent the site coming forward.

2.8 A planning application is expected to be submitted in 2027, with development intended to commence in 2028, subject to the timely determination of the application and discharge of any relevant pre-commencement requirements. This is important in the context of the delays that could be associated with larger allocations, including Hammonds Farm.

2.9 Dandara has remaining concerns in respect of the measures taken to ensure that the housing requirement is met in full across the Plan period, and the significant risks associated with the delivery of the new settlement proposed at Hammonds Farm expected to provide some 13% of the total housing requirement. This is compounded by the delays that have already been experienced with the delivery of site allocations in the adopted Local Plan.

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

2.10 Some modifications are required to the policy to ensure that the community provision requirement is clear. The updated Statement of Common Ground (October 2026), which can be found in Appendix 1, confirms on Page 2 that any requirement for a new community building would be subject to local support for its delivery and a commitment to its future management. The updated IDP similarly identifies a contribution towards community provision rather than requiring delivery of the facility itself.

2.11 The policy should therefore reflect the flexibility set out in the latest Statement of Common Ground which revises the wording of the Growth Site Policy 14b under paragraph 2.107 of the Focused Consultation Additional Sites Document from *"Consideration should be given to the provision of a new village hall on site"* to *"The site provides the opportunity to consider the enhancement or replacement of the existing village hall, or alternatively, to enable the provision of a new facility".* Subject to this modification, Dandara considers Growth Site Policy 14b to be sound.

3.0 Site Specific Questions: Location 14 – Ford End (Growth Site 14b)

Question w: Is the scale of development proposed consistent with the Spatial Principles and Spatial Strategy set out in Strategic Policies S1 and S7?

3.1 Yes. The allocation of Growth Site 14b represents a proportionate extension to Ford End and is consistent with the spatial strategy's approach to directing an appropriate level of growth to sustainable settlements.

3.2 In relation to Policy S1, the site adjoins the existing settlement and Ford End Primary School. Its development would form a logical extension to the village and provide direct pedestrian connections to the school, bus stop, church, playground, community centre and beyond.

3.3 In relation to Policy S7, the site would form part of Ford End, which is identified as a Service Settlement. The Local Plan's Spatial Strategy applies the Spatial Principles to focus new housing and employment growth to the most sustainable locations including Service Settlements outside the Green Belt in accordance with the Settlement Hierarchy. Service Settlements have a more limited range of services and facilities but typically include primary schools, convenience shopping facilities and community facilities making them suitable for a more limited scale of development. Growth in Service Settlements outside the Green Belt will reinforce their role as a provider of services to the local rural area and reflect the aspirations of national policy in promoting stronger communities.

3.4 The scale of development is appropriate to the location and character of Ford End. The allocation will contribute to housing supply, making effective use of land and provide affordable housing, while also providing opportunities to improve school parking, community provision, public open space, pedestrian connectivity and highway safety.

Question x: What is the likely impact of the proposed allocation on the following factors:

The strategic and local highway network including public transport and active travel:

3.5 No evidence has been identified to indicate that the allocation would give rise to an unacceptable impact on highway safety or that the residual cumulative effects on the road network would be severe, subject to appropriate mitigation.

3.6 The proposed allocation can provide safe vehicular access from Main Road (B1008). The development would also provide new pedestrian connections linking Pleshey Road, Ford End Primary School and the existing settlement beyond. Pre-application discussions with the Local Highway Authority have confirmed that the proposals are broadly acceptable to them. Precise locations of pedestrian crossings will be agreed at the planning application stage.

3.7 Traffic calming measures could help mitigate the effects of extending development along Main Road / Sandon Hill and help reduce traffic speeds through the village, which is an existing issue in the village.

3.8 The nearest bus stop to the site is located on the B1008, approximately 60m north of the most northern part of the site. The bus stop provides access to the 42A, X10 Airlink and X30 Airlink bus services, providing services to Chelmsford City Centre, Stansted Airport, Southend on Sea and Takeley.

3.9 Active travel proposals for the site include the provision of new pedestrian connections to the primary school, Pleshey Road and the village, encouraging walking and cycling, with additional potential connections to the wider PRoW network.

Agricultural land quality, landscape character, biodiversity and heritage assets:

3.10 The site is not subject to any statutory landscape, ecological or heritage designations and there are few heritage assets within the immediate vicinity of the site.

3.11 Development of the site would result in the loss of agricultural land, but the site is already severed from the wider agricultural holding by Ford End village to the north, Main Road to the east and Pleshey Road to the west. A ditch and established hedgerow separate it from another field to the south. It is therefore difficult to farm using modern machinery and well placed to accommodate an extension to the village. An Agricultural Land Classification Report commissioned by Dandara has confirmed that the land was 76% Grade 3a and 24% Grade 2. A copy can be provided if required.

3.12 Development will also change the site's existing landscape character, but it already adjoins the existing settlement and is capable of forming a contained extension to the village. Its gentle northward slope provides natural screening from views to the south, limiting its effect on the wider landscape. The enclosure provided by Main Road, Pleshey Road and Ringtail Green Road, and associated existing built form, will limit impacts.

3.13 The development will retain and enhance existing trees and hedgerows where possible and provide additional planting along the boundaries of the site. As referenced in the submitted Regulation 19 response, the 2022 Vision Document identifies planting along the southern boundary, together with public open space and an integrated green infrastructure network. These principles will be taken forward as part of the Planning Brief. These measures will help integrate the development into the surrounding landscape while supporting the delivery of a minimum 10% Biodiversity Net Gain on-site.

3.14 There are no conservation areas in Ford End. There are a range of Grade II listed buildings in the village to the north of the site, but none are in the immediate vicinity and the City Council's Local Plan evidence base indicates that there will be no impact upon their settings.

3.15 Ford End Primary School has been identified as a Non-Designated Heritage Asset by the City Council. The development will adjoin more modern education buildings at the southern end of the site rather than the original building fronting Main Road. Development will nevertheless be designed appropriately to respect its character and setting, addressing design advice from the City Council's Conservation Officer. Agreed principles in this respect include setting development

back from Main Road, reinstating the hedge line and adopting a layout, scale and materials that are informed by the local context. These matters have been discussed and developed further through the Planning Brief/Masterplan process.

Flood risk, air quality, noise and light pollution:

3.16 The site is located entirely within Flood Zone 1 and is at a low risk of surface water flooding. Surface water would be managed through a sustainable drainage system (SuDS).

3.17 There is no evidence available that flood risk, air quality, noise or light pollution would prevent development of the site. These matters are capable of being addressed through detailed design and technical assessment at the planning application stage, and appropriate planning conditions where necessary.

Other infrastructure, including education, health and utilities:

3.18 The development will generate additional demand for education, healthcare and other services. The policy and IDP identify a range of infrastructure requirements. The site provides an opportunity to deliver off-road parking for Ford End Primary School and improve the relationship between the school, the local highway network and pedestrian routes. However, the precise amount and location of the parking should be based on an evidenced requirement and determined through the Planning Brief and masterplanning process.

3.19 There is currently surplus capacity at Ford End Primary School. Provision of new housing nearby has been welcomed by school staff during pre-application engagement.

3.20 Appropriate contributions towards education, health and other infrastructure may be secured through CIL and Section 106 obligations where necessary. The respective role of those mechanisms should be clearly distinguished to avoid uncertainty.

3.21 Utilities capacity will need to be confirmed through engagement with the relevant providers. No evidence has presently been identified that utility infrastructure represents an overriding constraint to the allocation.

Question y: What mitigation measures would be needed to ensure a sustainable form of development, and are they clearly set out in the policy?

3.22 Mitigation measures needed to ensure a sustainable form of development include, but are not limited to:

- Safe vehicular access from Main Road (B1008);
- Pedestrian and cycle connections to Ford End Primary School, Pleshey Road and the village;
- Traffic calming measures;
- Off-road parking provision for Ford End Primary School;
- Landscaping and reinforcement of the site boundaries;
- Retention and enhancement of existing trees and hedgerows;

- Public open space and play provision;
- Biodiversity Net Gain;
- Sustainable drainage;
- Appropriate education, healthcare, recreation and other infrastructure contributions, where required;
- Appropriate community provision or contribution.

3.23 Growth Site Policy 14b identifies most of the principal mitigation measures that must be addressed.

3.24 The updated Statement of Common Ground (October 2026) and IDP recognise that the most appropriate solution regarding the community facility provision may come from a financial contribution rather than on-site provision but provides flexibility regarding its delivery. Therefore, the policy should be updated to reflect this change.

3.25 The policy identifies the principal outcomes required but should retain sufficient flexibility for the detailed form and scale of the mitigation to be established through the development management process.

Question z: What is the justification for the policy requirement to provide a new community/village hall on site? Do the policy and explanatory text clearly set out what is expected?

3.26 Dandara supports the principle that the development should make an appropriate contribution towards community provision where a need arising from the development is demonstrated. As submitted, Growth Site Policy 14b requires the development to provide a new community/village hall on-site, whereas the accompanying explanatory text refers to “the opportunity to consider the replacement of the existing village hall”, with the precise specification to be considered through the site Planning Brief process.

3.27 The October 2026 Statement of Common Ground, submitted with this Hearing Statement, records agreement that any requirement for a new community building must be subject to local support for its delivery and a commitment to its future management. The IDP schedule has been updated accordingly and now identifies a contribution towards the provision of a new community/village hall, rather than provision of the facility itself. This change should be reflected in the policy.

3.28 The proposed amendment to the explanatory text is welcomed. It recognises that a new on-site building may not be the only, or necessarily the most appropriate, means of supporting community provision. It also allows evidence of need, local community preferences, management arrangements and the deliverability of the different options to be considered through the Planning Brief process.

3.29 Subject to this modification, Dandara is satisfied that the development can make an appropriate and proportionate contribution towards community provision.

Word Count: 2,534

APPENDIX 1
UPDATED STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND OCTOBER 2026

SOCG028A

Chelmsford Local Plan

Statement of Common Ground with Dandara (GS14b)

October 2026

Chelmsford Local Plan

Statement of Common Ground
Chelmsford City Council and Dandara

1. Introduction

Chelmsford City Council (CCC) is reviewing the Chelmsford Local Plan adopted in 2020. This has reached submission stage (Regulation 22) following consultations on the:

- Pre-Submission (Regulation 19) Local Plan (Pre-Submission Plan for short) in Spring 2025 and
- Focused Consultation (Regulation 19) Additional Sites Document (Additional Sites Document for short) in late 2025-early 2026.

This Statement of Common Ground (SOCG) has been prepared by CCC and Dandara in relation to the proposed allocation for Growth Site 14b - Land South of Ford End Primary School (GS14b), a development site that will deliver housing growth over the plan period.

Dandara is promoting the land that is subject to the proposed allocation. A plan of the site is shown on Map GS14b of the Additional Sites Maps, attached at **Appendix 1**.

The purpose of the Statement of Common Ground (SOCG) is to assist the examination of the Local Plan which comprises the Pre-Submission Plan combined with the site allocations and consequential changes in the Additional Sites Document.

The matters covered in this SOCG relate to the site allocation. It establishes areas of agreement and disagreement between Dandara and CCC in relation to Dandara's representations on the Pre-Submission Plan (Representation numbers PSQ25-6293, PSQ25-6297 and PSQ25-6303) and the Additional Sites Document (Representation number AS-1139).

CCC has engaged with Dandara on the development of the Council's review of the adopted Local Plan from the outset, and they have had an opportunity to comment at each stage.

The agreed matters in this SOCG do not preclude any written or verbal representations that the City Council and Site Promoters may wish to make as part of the Local Plan Examination hearings.

2. Common ground

Areas of Common Ground

The parties agree:

- That the Strategic Priorities, Vision and Spatial Principles within the Chelmsford Pre-Submission Local Plan provide a robust and sound strategic framework in respect of GS14b
- That the plan is supported by robust infrastructure modelling contained within the Infrastructure Delivery Plan Update (INF001) and together with all other policy requirements have been the subject of appropriate viability testing (V001 & V002) in respect of GS14b
- The site policy requirements for:
    - Around 75 homes
    - Movement and Access
    - Historic and Natural Environment
    - Design and Layout
    - Site Infrastructure Requirements in principle, but the requirement for a new community building must be subject to support for its delivery and a commitment to future management from the local community
- The site boundary, as shown on the map in Appendix 1
- That the site allocation is deliverable within the timeframe set out in the plan and trajectory, is a suitable location for housing development and is viable
- That a Planning Brief for the site will be produced by the Council and is close to being agreed
- That there are no over-riding issues and constraints to bringing forward this development site in accordance with the Chelmsford Local Plan.

The following table sets out Dandara's relevant representations to the Pre-Submission Plan and Additional Sites Document.

Consultation Document	Rep Number	Local Plan Reference	Summary of representation	Agreed resolution and any proposed modifications
Pre-Submission Plan	PSQ25-6293	GS14b	Dandara supports the allocation which represents a sustainable village location where development can contribute to meeting housing need.	Support for the site allocation is noted. **No modifications required to the Plan.**
Pre-Submission Plan	PSQ25-6297	GS14b	Dandara requests that the allocation be expanded to include the full 5.37-hectare site for up to 50 dwellings, enabling more housing.	Further land promoted by Dandara has subsequently been proposed for allocation as part of an expansion of the site to contribute towards improving the 5-year land supply position in the Additional Sites Plan. **No modifications required to the Plan.**
Pre-Submission Plan	PSQ25-6303	GS14b	Dandara generally supports Policy DM20 and considers that expanding Site 14b would provide an opportunity to deliver community facilities alongside housing.	Further land promoted by Dandara has subsequently been proposed for allocation as part of an expansion of the site to contribute towards improving the 5-year land supply position in the Additional Sites Plan, which includes the provision of additional community facilities. **No modifications required to the Plan.**

Consultation Document	Rep Number	Local Plan Reference	Summary of representation	Agreed resolution and any proposed modifications
Additional Sites Document	AS-1139	GS14b	Dandara welcomes the changes made to Policy GS14b in respect of representations made at the Pre-submission stage.	Noted. **No modifications required to the Plan.**
Additional Sites Document	AS-1139	GS14b	Dandara confirms that around 75 dwellings will be deliverable by the end of 2029.	Support for the deliverability of the site within the timeframes set out is noted. **No modifications required to the Plan.**
Additional Sites Document	AS-1139	GS14b	Dandara highlights a possible discrepancy between policy wording on a required new village hall and reasoned justification wording on the opportunity to provide a village hall.	The difference between the policy and text included in the reasoned justification is recognised. NEW Modification proposed: Amend 3rd bullet point Supporting on-site development • **Support the provision a village hall.**
Additional Sites Document.	AS-1139	GS14b Paragraph 2.107	Dandara highlights a possible discrepancy between policy wording on a required new village hall and reasoned justification wording on the opportunity to provide a village hall.	NEW modification proposed: Amend 3rd sentence: The site provides the opportunity to consider the **enhancement or** replacement of the existing village hall **or, alternatively, to enable the provision of a new facility**. The precise specification will be considered as part of the site planning brief process.

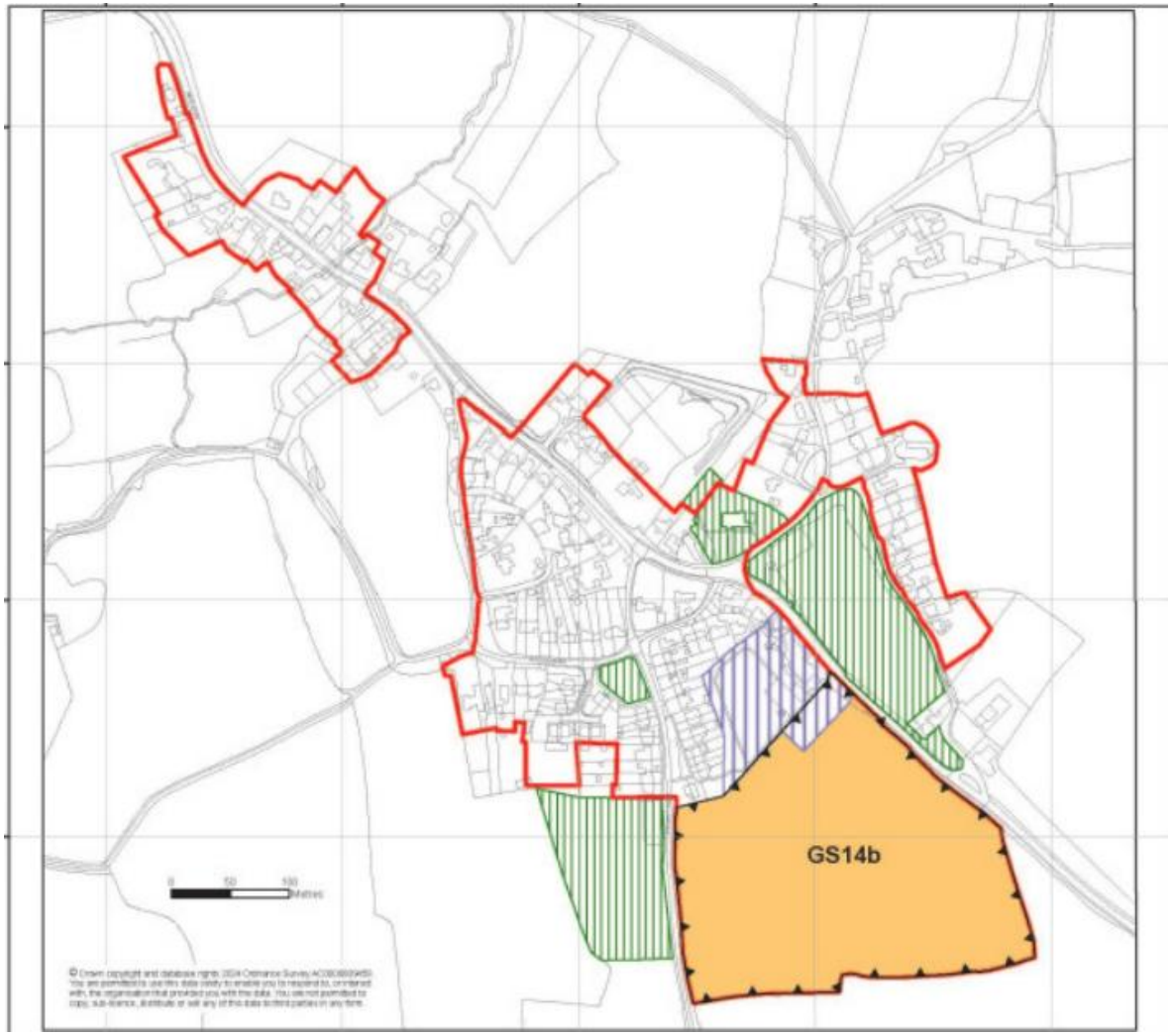
3. Governance and on-going cooperation

CCC will continue to work collaboratively with Dandara to address matters that, in addition to those above, arise through the examination process. The SOCG will be kept up to date accordingly.

4. Signatories

Chelmsford City Council Jeremy Potter **Spatial Planning Services Manager** Signature:  Date: 31st March 2026	Dandara David Hill **Head of Strategic Land** Signature:  Date: 1st April 2026

Appendix 1 – Extract from Additional Sites Map GS14b





This publication is available in alternative formats including large print, audio and other languages

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