HS075

Andrew Martin PLANNING

Chelmsford Local Plan Examination in Public

Hearing Statement

on behalf of

Croudace Homes

Matter 6 – Site Selection

October 2026 | AM-P Ref: 15024 | Representation ID: AS-410

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INTRODUCTION

1. This Hearing Statement has been prepared by Andrew Martin – Planning Limited (AM-P) on behalf of Croudace Homes (Croudace).

2. Croudace controls all 16.7 hectares (ha) of land immediately to the north and east of Rettendon Place. This land is allocated in Strategic Growth Site (SGS) Policy 20 of the Chelmsford Focused Consultation Additional Sites (Regulation 19) Document (November 2025) (SD002) for a sustainable extension to the settlement.

3. This Hearing Statement supplements our formal representations from January 2026 (Representation ID AS-410) and considers the Inspector's relevant Issues and Questions for Matter 6 of the Chelmsford Local Plan Examination.

MATTER 6 – ISSUE 1 – SITE ALLOCATIONS

Q6.3 – What is the current planning status of the site (eg masterplans, permissions, completions)? Have there been any changes since the Plan was submitted for examination and if so, are any modifications needed?

4. The whole of SGS 20 is under the control of Croudace Homes, an established housebuilder with a proven track record of delivering new homes in the District, including at The Lanes in North East Chelmsford. Croudace has an option agreement in place with the landowners to promote and bring forward a residential-led development at SGS 20.

5. Croudace has commenced engagement with local housing associations – most notably the Chelmer Housing Partnership (now Delta Housing) – with a view to securing an affordable housing partner who will be able to provide long-term stewardship on this development.

6. Since the allocation of this site in SD002 in November 2025, Croudace has engaged with the Council and agreed a Statement of Common Ground (March 2026) (SOCG017) confirming that: (i) both parties support the new Local Plan and the policy requirements for this site; (ii) the allocation is deliverable within the timeframe set out in the Plan; (iii) this is a suitable and viable location for housing; and, (iv) there are no over-riding issues and constraints to bringing forward this development.

7. Croudace also obtained an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Opinion (ref. 26/00879/EIASO) from the Council in August 2026, which confirms that the proposals are not EIA development.

8. Furthermore, Croudace and the Council have commenced discussions on a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA), which both parties acknowledge as being beneficial to set the framework and programme for the preparation and approval of a site-specific master plan document.

9. In summary no modifications are required to the Local Plan in relation SGS 20.

Q6.4 – For the housing sites, what is the basis for the proposed capacity?

10. Croudace's Team of specialist consultants has carried out a suite of urban design, landscape, ecology, transport, archaeological, flood risk, surface water drainage and foul water drainage work to examine SGS 20 and to consider how a residential-led development could be delivered on the site.

11. The result of this work is set out in the Vision Document (December 2025) that was appended to our formal representations in January 2026 (Representation ID AS-410). This demonstrates that the site has sufficient capacity to accommodate the 350 new homes, small-scale retail provision, expansion of the existing primary school (0.36 ha), expansion of the existing or creation of a new early years and childcare nursery (0.11 ha), multifunctional network of greenspace, public open space, sport and recreation space, SuDS, vehicular access from Main Road and pedestrian and cycle connections expected in SGS Policy 20.

12. The total site area extends to 16.7 ha and the Vision Document indicates how residential development can be delivered on at least 8 ha of this land. Therefore, at average density of 21 dwellings per ha (dph) gross and approximately 40 dph net, the site can accommodate around 350 new homes. Croudace is satisfied that an appropriate housing mix can be provided be provided at this density, potentially including maisonettes, terraced, semi-detached and detached homes.

Q6.5 – 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?

13. The allocation at SGS Policy 20 explicitly includes small-scale retail provision, the expansion of the existing primary school (0.36 ha) and the expansion of the existing or creation of a new early years and childcare nursery (0.11 ha).

14. Croudace proposed small-scale retail provision at the outset of promotion of this site in order to provide for the day-to-day needs of both new and existing residents. The settlement of Rettendon Place currently includes a primary school, nursery, village hall, recreation ground, church and bus stops on Main Road, but no local convenience store. The provision of small-scale retail provision at SGS 20 will address this existing deficiency and enhance the sustainability of the settlement generally, reducing the need for residents to make journeys to other settlements.

15. Croudace also proposed reserve land to extend Rettendon Primary School at an early stage of the site's promotion. Subsequent discussions between the Council and the Local Education Authority, Essex County Council, identified that 0.36 ha of land for expansion of the primary school and 0.11 ha of land for the expansion of the childcare nursery (or a new nursery) will be required to mitigate the educational impacts of the new homes.

16. In summary Croudace has accommodated both small-scale retail provision and a total of 0.47 ha of education land in its masterplan vision for the site. These non-residential uses are necessary and justified for the reasons set out above.

Q6.6 – Are the development requirements clear, and are any further safeguards or mitigation measures necessary to achieve an acceptable form of development?

17. The requirements for development on land to the east and north of Rettendon Place are clearly set out in the bullet points at SGS Policy 20 of SD002.

18. Having regard to the work undertaken to inform the Vision Document, Croudace is satisfied that the requirements in SGS Policy 20 are sufficient to achieve an acceptable form of development at the site and that no further safeguards or mitigation measures are necessary.

Q6.7 – What is the expected timescale and rate of development for the housing sites and is this realistic?

19. The development trajectory at Section 4 of SD002 expects SGS 20 to deliver its first completions in 2028/29 and produce 50 new homes per annum during 2028/29 and 2029/30, rising to 75 new homes per annum from 2030/31 onwards. As a result, all 350 new homes at SGS 20 should be delivered by mid to late 2033.

20. This is consistent with Croudace's anticipated timescales for the site which include: producing a site-specific master plan document and hybrid planning application next year, enabling planning permission to be granted by the end of 2027; the discharge of planning conditions and a start on-site in the first half of 2028; and, the delivery of the first 50 homes by Spring 2029.

21. Croudace is satisfied that the delivery of 50 homes per annum initially and 75 homes per annum by Year 3 is realistic on this site, subject to market conditions.

Q6.8 – Are any modifications to the site policy needed for soundness?

22. As set out in our response to SD002 in January 2026, no modifications are necessary to SGS Policy 20. Croudace is satisfied that the policy is sound in accordance with paragraph 35 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2023) which this Plan is being examined against.

Growth Area 3 – South and East Chelmsford

Location 20 – Rettendon Place – Strategic Growth Site Policy 20

Q(w). Does the quantum of development proposed in SGS Policy 20 accord with the Spatial Principles and Spatial Strategy set out in Strategic Policies S1 and S7?

23. SGS Policy 20 allocates around 350 homes and other supporting uses – including small-scale retail provision which will enhance the sustainability of the settlement – on land to the east and north of

Rettendon Place. This quantum of development is consistent with the Spatial Principles set out in Strategic Policy S1 and the Spatial Strategy set out in Strategic Policy S7 of the Local Plan.

24. Strategic Policy S1 requires all new development to accord with relevant Spatial Principles. The work undertaken for Croudace and presented in the Vision Document (December 2025) that was appended to our formal representations in January 2026 (Representation ID AS-410) helps to demonstrate how the allocation:

- is located in a well-connected and sustainable location, which the development will further enhance with new or improved infrastructure;
- protects and does not encroach into the Green Belt, which is situated to the south and west of Rettendon Place only;
- focuses development at higher order settlements and respects the development pattern and hierarchy of other settlements, with Rettendon Place being recognised as a 'Service Settlement' in the Spatial Strategy;
- respects the character and appearance of the landscape and built environment, based on a masterplan vision that seeks minimise any landscape and visual harm and enhance the appearance of the settlement;
- preserves and enhances the historic and natural environment and biodiversity, based on a masterplan vision that seeks to avoid heritage impacts, has regard to key ecological receptors and will deliver a net gain in biodiversity;
- locates all new development on land at the lowest risk of flooding and will incorporate other sustainability measures to reduce carbon emissions;
- proposes a variety of new or improved infrastructure to serve the development and the existing community, including but not limited to retail, education, public open and green space, highways and public transport; and
- ensures the development is deliverable.

25. Strategic Policy S7 confirms that the focus for new housing growth will be the most sustainable locations in the District and by making best use of previously developed land, new garden communities, sustainable urban extensions and development around Key Service Settlements and Service Settlements outside the Green Belt. As explained above, Rettendon Place is classified as a 'Service Settlement' in Strategic Policy S7 and is situated outside the Green Belt. Allocating around 350 homes to the east and north of this settlement therefore complies with the Local Plan's Spatial Strategy.

Q(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*

26. Essex County Council's Highway Impact Junction Modelling Appraisal (October 2025) (T007) assesses the impact of the additional sites allocated in SD002, including SGS 20, on the strategic highway

network. Section 6 of the Modelling Appraisal finds that the additional sites are only likely to add small numbers of trips to the background traffic flows and other adopted Local Plan development trips at junctions on the strategic highway network by 2041. The Modelling Appraisal therefore concludes that it is highly unlikely that the trips associated with the additional sites will be of sufficient scale to significantly impact the capacity of junctions on that network.

27. Although development south of Chelmsford is expected to increase the volume of trips looking to route through A12 Junction 17 at Howe Green, the overall impact on junction capacity is forecast to be small given the extent of congestion already modelled at the junction in 2041 for the Local Plan Pre-Submission Document (SD001). The Modelling Appraisal does not seek further mitigation to address the highway impacts of trips associated with the additional sites.

28. SGS Policy 20 in SD002 expects the site to deliver appropriate improvements to the local and strategic road network and new and enhanced foot and cycle paths. Paragraph 2.172 of SD002 indicates that any improvements to the existing highway required to mitigate the impact of this development will be primarily focused on contributions towards any junction enhancements, such as to the A132 / B1012 Rettendon Turnpike, in order to improve the flow of traffic onto the strategic road network.

29. Croudace instructed EAS Transport Planning to examine the local highway and transport network for all modes of transport as part of the work undertaken to inform the Vision Document. EAS's work identifies that the development could contribute towards improvements for pedestrians, cyclists, public transport and traffic capacity at the A132 / B1012 Rettendon Turnpike Roundabout. This includes increasing the circulatory distance and signalising side arms, increasing the width of entry lanes, as well as creating a dedicated cut through for bus routes and cyclists.

30. Other local improvements could include but are not limited to:

- Sustainable connectivity improvements to the route and footway along Hawk Hill with widening of the footway and a slight narrowing of the carriageway, enabling the existing footway to be converted to a cycleway providing a direct connection between the site, through the proposed Turnpike Roundabout improvement and to Battlesbridge railway station.

- Improvements east of the site towards South Woodham Ferrers including surfacing and conversion of a footpath to cycle path between the site and Rectory Lane. Rectory Lane could then provide a connection between the site and Woodham Road which bypasses the Turnpike Roundabout and other highly trafficked junctions / roads.

31. In summary, the development of SGS20 could contribute towards local highway improvements, such as to the Turnpike Roundabout and to foot, cycle and public transport connections in the local area more generally.

- *Agricultural land quality, landscape character, biodiversity and heritage assets*

32. Page 14 of Appendix C of the Council's Integrated Impact Assessment (November 2025) (SD009) suggests that the proposed allocation is likely to cause a significant negative effect on land use, due to the loss of agricultural land on-site. However, Natural England's Agricultural Land Classification Map for the East Region (2010) indicates that the proposed allocation comprises Grade 3 agricultural land and that most greenfield parts of the District are either Grade 2 (very good) or Grade 3 (good to moderate) agricultural land. This means that once all available previously developed sites have been identified for growth, the loss of some greenfield land is inevitable in order to address the Local Plan's housing needs. The proposed allocation utilises the lower of the two agricultural grades of land commonly found in the District.

33. Croudace appointed The Landscape Partnership (TLP) to undertake an initial review of the landscape and visual aspects of the site. The site lies within undulating countryside, with the western part of the site, which lies adjacent to the existing settlement, generally level and the eastern part more undulating. A minor local ridgeline at 45-40m AOD forms the southern boundary of the site and a further ridgeline runs east west in the vicinity of New Hall Fruit Farm. The southeastern part of the site comprises a valley formed by a stream tributary of Fenn Creek which ultimately runs into the River Crouch. In landscape and visual terms, TLP considers there is good potential for the development to be well integrated into the local landscape by careful consideration of existing topography and vegetation and the introduction of strategic open space and planting on-site. How best to minimise any landscape and visual impacts will be considered in more detail when a site-specific master plan document is prepared and approved in 2027.

34. Croudace instructed Sweco to carry out a preliminary ecological appraisal, extended phase 1 survey and protected species scoping survey of the proposed allocation. Species surveys are currently ongoing. The site predominantly consists of arable fields with hedgerows along the field boundaries. Within the site boundary there are also small areas of improved grassland, woodland and scrub, two dry ditches and a pond which are areas of habitat suitable for wildlife. Croudace's vision for the site include the retention of the majority of the hedgerows and areas of woodland and scrub, and includes the provision of areas of green space. Following the completion of all required surveys and assessments, ecological mitigation, as well as habitat creation and enhancement, will be incorporated into the proposed scheme. The areas to be set aside as green space provide an opportunity to incorporate new areas of habitat. The combination of habitat creation, retention and enhancements provides an opportunity to ensure that ecological impacts are minimised and to deliver a biodiversity net gain locally.

35. There are no listed buildings or conservation areas on or adjacent to the proposed allocation. Therefore the development will not cause any direct impact to heritage assets. Listed buildings are situated on the opposite side of Main Road (including the Grade II Old Rettendon Hall and Grade I Church of All Saints), along with Rettendon Primary School which the Council considers to be a non-designated heritage asset. However, the development will preserve and where appropriate enhance

the setting of Rettendon Old House and Rettendon Primary School, and protect long views of All Saints Church, in accordance with SGS Policy 20.

- *Flood risk, air quality, noise and light pollution*

36. Croudace instructed Odyssey to undertake a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) incorporating a Surface Water Strategy as part of the work necessary to inform the Vision Document. Odyssey's FRA confirms that the site falls within Flood Zone 1 in relation to fluvial flood risk and that the surface water generated by the development will be attenuated in at least two consecutive basins, prior to discharging to existing ditches. This proposed approach will protect the sensitive receiving waters downstream. On-parcel SuDS such as permeable paving will also be incorporated into the design to provide additional attenuation and further water treatment benefits. The attenuation features will be designed to accommodate the 1 in 100 year storm event plus an additional 45% allowance for climate change. As a result the completed development will provide a net benefit in flood risk and surface water drainage terms compared to the status quo.

37. The Council published a Review of its Air Quality Impact Assessment (CC016) in September 2025. This finds at Section 3 that the 350 new dwellings planned at Rettendon Place are unlikely to lead to a change in concentrations of 5% of the standard and therefore the allocation's air quality impact is considered 'negligible'.

38. The proposed allocation is not expected to experience any unacceptable impact in from noise or cause any unacceptable noise. However, this will be assessed as part of a site-specific noise impact assessment in due course and, if necessary, measures to avoid or attenuate any noise related impacts will be incorporated when a planning application is brought forward in 2027.

39. The proposed allocation is not expected to cause any unacceptable light pollution on the surrounding landscape, ecological receptors or existing residential properties. However, the design of any external lighting will be considered carefully in due course when a planning application is brought forward in 2027.

- *Other infrastructure, including education, health, recreation and utilities*

40. The Council's Primary and Secondary Education Note (September 2025) (INF008) confirms that 0.47 ha of land is required at the proposed allocation for the expansion of Rettendon Primary School and for early years and childcare provision. This is reflected in the requirements at SGS Policy 20 and also in Croudace's Vision Document. Furthermore, Appendix A.30 of the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan (March 2026) (INF012) refers to this allocation making estimated financial contributions of £683,648 towards early years provision, £1,881,400 towards primary education and £1,743,874 towards secondary education, in order to mitigate its impacts.

41. It is acknowledged that the proposed allocation will place an additional demand on healthcare facilities in the local area. SGS Policy 20 includes a requirement for financial contributions towards expanded

healthcare provision and Appendix A.30 of INF012 refers to indicative contribution amounts of £287.47 per dwelling towards a new ambulance hub and £827.63 per dwelling towards a new primary healthcare facility in South or East Chelmsford to mitigate this additional demand.

42. Similarly the proposed allocation will create an additional demand for recreation facilities. Croudace's Vision Document recognises this and makes provision for a 0.53 ha expansion of the existing recreation ground in Rettendon Place and other new public open space and greenspace on-site. SGS Policy 20 also expects financial contributions to be sought towards offsite sport and leisure facilities.

43. Croudace is in the process of undertaking up to date capacity checks to confirm that electricity, water and telecommunications capacity can be made available to serve the allocation, or can be made available subject to upgrades / reinforcement work.

Q(y). Are the essential site specific requirements and mitigation measures justified, and will they, along with other policies in the plan, be effective in achieving sustainable development on the site?

44. The site specific requirements and mitigation measures are clearly set out in the bullet points at SGS Policy 20 of SD002.

45. Croudace is satisfied that the requirements and measures in SGS Policy 20 are justified and will be effective in achieving sustainable development at the site. As well as mitigating the impacts of the development itself, some of these requirements will enhance the sustainability of the settlement, enhance the environment and promote more sustainable modes of travel generally. These benefits include the on-site provision of small-scale retail, a variety of public open space / greenspace and a net gain in biodiversity and the wider improvement of foot, cycle and public transport connections in the area.

Q(z). Can required capacity increases in wastewater treatment and disposal be provided to support development within the timescales set out?

46. Croudace instructed Odyssey to undertake an FRA incorporating a Foul Water Strategy as part of the work necessary to inform the Vision Document. Odyssey met with Anglian Water and confirmed that upgrades to the South Woodham Ferrers Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) are planned to be delivered by March 2030 as part of Asset Management Plan 8. Another option to treat and dispose of foul water flows from the site is to discharge to Anglian Water's Wickford WwTW and/or Rayleigh West WwTW.

47. In the unlikely event that neither of these Anglian Water related options are found to be feasible within the necessary timescales, then Odyssey has also consulted with a New Appointments & Variations (NAV) company to consider the possibility of constructing a new WwTW onsite to manage the foul flows.

48. Therefore capacity for foul water treatment and disposal can be made available to support the development in SGS Policy 20, most likely via an Anglian Water WwTW, and the development will be deliverable.

SUMMARY

49. Croudace controls SGS 20 at Rettendon Place and considers the allocation of around 350 homes and supporting uses to be deliverable, without any modifications to the Local Plan.

50. Specialist work carried out to date and Croudace's Vision Document demonstrate that the site can accommodate all of the requirements set out in SGS Policy 20 and that any potential impacts on highways, landscape, ecology, heritage, flood risk and services can be addressed or suitably mitigated.

51. The preparation of a site-specific master plan document and a hybrid planning application are expected in 2027, enabling development to commence from 2028 and deliver the first phase of new homes during the first five years of the Local Plan period.

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