

Addendum 2: Duty to Cooperate with Basildon Council

Purpose of this Appendix

1. The purpose of this appendix is to set out Castle Point Borough Council's ("Council") engagement with Basildon Council ("BC") throughout the Council's local plan-making process and to explain why a signed Statement of Common Ground ("SoCG") with BC is not in place at the point of submission.

Summary of the Council's Position

2. It is the Council's position that it has actively and constructively engaged with BC throughout the plan-making process to agree on a SoCG. To that extent, the Council understood that a SoCG had been agreed with BC in November 2025. This was based on discussions at a Duty to Cooperate meeting held on 18 November 2025, during which BC agreed to the SoCG, subject only to a few minor amendments.
3. Such amendments were agreed upon, and the final version of the SoCG was accordingly sent to BC on 24 November 2025. The Council understood from subsequent correspondence with BC officers that the SoCG would be signed following its internal governance processes.
4. However, the Council was subsequently advised that BC had revised its position and took an amended version of the SoCG to Cabinet for approval, which did not reflect the version the Council understood to have been agreed and issued to BC in November 2025.
5. The Council is particularly surprised by the apparent change in Basildon Council's position following what the Council was advised was a clear and mutual agreement reached in November 2025. The Council has cooperated constructively and in good faith throughout this process to reach an agreement with BC.

Background and Chronology

6. In May 2023, the Council wrote to 78 organisations with an interest in the administrative area of the Council, either as a neighbouring authority, an authority in Essex, or a service provider in the local area. The organisations were asked to complete fact sheets explaining their interest and ambitions in relation to the Borough of Castle Point, and how the Council's local plan could help them achieve their vision. BC were included within this invite but did not respond.
7. In September 2023, the Council responded to BC's 'Issues and Options' consultation (issued under Reg 18 of the Regulations) run by BC as part of their own local plan-making process. In this consultation response, the Council advised that BC had not responded to its letter of May 2023 and again invited BC to set out likely areas of cross-boundary cooperation moving forward. No response was received to this.
8. Following this, the publication of the Council's 'Issues and Options' consultation coincided with consultation on the draft NPPF published in July 2024, which, as the Inspector will be aware, included proposed changes to standard methodology.
9. BC then responded to the Council's 'Issues and Options' consultation on 9 September 2024, highlighting the challenges for the Council in meeting the housing requirement emerging from the proposed standard method, indicating that (among other things) additional work needed to be undertaken on housing capacity and advising that BC would not be able to assist in meeting the Council's housing requirements.
10. The proposed changes to the standard methodology were discussed at 'Duty to Cooperate' meetings between BC and the Council in July 2024 and October 2024, respectively. Further Duty to Cooperate meetings took place throughout 2025 where a range of matters including

housing need and supply were discussed. These are detailed in the Duty to Cooperate Statement and its supporting appendices.

11. In October 2025, BC responded to the Council's consultation made under Regulation 19. Whilst the response highlighted concerns regarding the level housing growth compared to the standard method requirement, it did not seek modifications to the Castle Point Plan. The Inspector is invited to review correspondence found at Enclosure 1 of this addendum.
12. Following October 2025, the following chronology is relevant:
 - a) **13 November 2025** : a draft SoCG was prepared by the Council, based on BC's representation issued in response to the Council's Reg 19 consultation and sent to BC for consideration.
 - b) **18 November 2025**: a 'Duty to Cooperate' meeting took place between the Council and BC when the SoCG was discussed. The minutes were sent on 19 November 2025 and were agreed with some changes by BC in an email the same day. The minutes record that all paragraphs within the SoCG were agreed, except for the changes to paragraphs 6.3, 10.3, and 10.4 proposed by BC. (See Enclosure 2)
 - c) **24 November 2025**: the amendments proposed by BC (as set out above) were accepted by the Council, and the final agreed SoCG was sent to BC with the intention of the SoCG being signed by the respective parties. (Enclosure 3)
 - d) **25 November 2025**: an email was received by the Council from BC confirming that an update will be provided to the Council once the SoCG is signed. (Enclosure 4)
 - e) **4, 5 and 8 December 2025**: the Council follows up with BC regarding whether the SoCG has now been signed. (Enclosure 5)
 - f) **8 December 2025**: a holding email is received from BC notifying the Council that the internal governance requirements of the SoCG being signed are being reviewed by BC's democratic services team. (Enclosure 6)
 - g) **10 December 2025**: further follow-up by the Council in respect of whether the SoCG has been signed. A response is received on the same day notifying the Council that BC have chased their internal democratic team. (Enclosure 7)
 - h) **12 and 15 December 2025**: the Council follows up with BC regarding whether the SoCG has now been signed (Enclosure 8)
 - i) **18 December 2025**: email confirming a telephone conversation BC that the SoCG is to be signed by BC's portfolio holder this week, and this will be followed by a 5 working day scrutiny period. (Enclosure 9))
 - j) **22 December 2025**: BC issues a revised SoCG to the Council, which includes points not previously agreed or discussed with the Council (Enclosure 10)
 - k) **24 December 2025**: Unknown to the Council, BC enter a Cabinet Member Decision Record on its ModGov system in respect of the amended unagreed SoCG to seek authorisation to enter into the SoCG (Enclosure 11 and Enclosure 12)
 - l) **6 January 2026**: BC informs the Council that new unagreed SoCG signed. (Enclosure 13)
 - m) **8 January 2026**: Castle Point respond to BC, advising that it had not agreed the points in the revised SoCG (Enclosure 14)

- n) **22 January 2026:** BC respond providing a further revised draft of the SoCG which further alters the position agreed in November 2025. (Enclosure 15)

Recent Engagement and Attempts to Resolve the Position

13. On the 26 January 2026, the Council sent a letter to BC setting out concerns regarding BC's revised position and seeking clarity on why BC had not signed the version agreed in November 2025 ("Letter"). (Enclosure 16)
14. In summary, the Letter sets out:
 - a) The Council's understanding is that agreement had been reached at the meeting of 18 November 2025.
 - b) The Council's concern that BC had taken a different version of the SoCG to Cabinet without notifying the Council.
 - c) The Council's request for an explanation as to why BC did not sign the earlier agreed version and why BC was now adopting a different position.
 - d) The Council's observation that BC appeared to be seeking to make additional representations beyond those contained in BC's Regulation 19 representation of 16 October 2025
 - e) The Council's position on the planning matters raised by BC.

15. On the 27 January 2026, the Council then attended a 'Duty to Cooperate' with BC to discuss the above. BC has advised that they will consider their position in light of the matters raised by the Council and will provide a further update. The Council is awaiting this update from BC and remains willing to engage constructively with BC to agree a SoCG.

Current Position .

16. It is unknown to the Council why BC unilaterally revised the SoCG in December 2025 and presented this version to its Cabinet without prior discussion or notification to the Council. The Council has at all times acted in good faith and has sought to cooperate constructively with BC. The Council was advised that the SoCG had been resolved and agreed in November 2025, and proceeded with submission preparations on that basis.
17. As set out in the Council's letter of 26 January 2026, the Council notes that BC's revised position appears to go beyond the representations made in BC's Regulation 19 response of October 2025, which did not seek any modifications to the Plan. We hope to further explore this position with BC.

Conclusion

18. The Council has at all times sought to engage constructively and cooperatively with BC on strategic cross-boundary matters. The Council remains committed to continuing this constructive engagement and will update the Inspector as soon as a further response is received from BC.

Enclosure 1: Basildon Response to the Castle Point Plan Regulation 19 Consultation

Sent by Email to:
Planning Policy
Castle Point Borough Council
CPPlan@castlepoint.gov.uk

Dear Sir / Madam,

**Basildon Borough Council's Holding Response to Castle Point Borough Council's
Regulation 19 – Draft Local Plan Consultation 2025**

Please accept this letter as a holding response from Basildon Borough Council in relation to the Castle Point Borough Council's Regulation 19 – Draft Local Plan Consultation 2025. Once this response has been through the democratic processes at Basildon Borough Council I will send you the final formal response of the Council.

Introduction

- 1.1 Basildon Borough Council is a neighbouring local planning authority (LPA) to Castle Point and there are a number of strategic issues, such as housing and infrastructure, which have cross-boundary impacts over a number of local authority areas. It is important that such issues are addressed through collaborative working and meaningful discussions in accordance with the Duty to Cooperate, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG).
- 1.2 It is understood that the main purpose of the consultation document is to ensure that Castle Point's Local Plan is legally compliant and meets the tests of soundness. Please be advised that for all of the consultation points below, the Council would like to attend the future oral hearings as part of the Plan's Examination in Public.

Q. Do you consider the Castle Point Plan Draft document to be legally compliant?

- 1.3 Basildon Borough Council does not believe that the Castle Point Local Plan 2026-2043 is compliant with necessary legislation. The National Planning Policy Framework expects strategic policy-making authorities to follow the standard method for assessing local housing need. The standard method identifies a minimum annual housing need figure and ensures that plan-making is informed by an unconstrained assessment of the number of homes needed in an area (PPG Paragraph: 002 Reference ID: 2a-002-20241212). Whilst Basildon Borough Council fully appreciates the scale of the challenge and complexity of planning for housing, the alternative approach to calculating housing need is not compliant with relevant legislation.

1.4 The revised Local Development Scheme (LDS, July 2025) identifies two months from publication of Regulation 19 to submission. The Council may need to revise the timetable to allow consultants to finalise outstanding commissioned assessments and for review of consultation responses, which may require additional work to be carried out.

Q. Do you consider the Castle Point Plan Draft document to be sound?

1.5 Basildon Borough Council does not believe that the Castle Point Local Plan 2026-2043 meets the tests of soundness in all of its policy areas.

Positively Prepared

1.6 Castle Point Draft Local Plan does not make adequate housing provision using the Standard Method and therefore is a failure to meet the housing need of the area. The housing provision set out in Policy SP3 delivering a minimum of 6,196 new homes over the plan period (2026-2043) accounts to 53% of the requirement set out by the Standard method, which accounts for an unmet need of 5,466 homes.

1.7 Following the publication of the new NPPF (December 2024) Basildon Council is also required to accommodate an increased level of growth and are unable to accommodate any unmet housing need from neighbouring or nearby local authorities, including Castle Point Council.

1.8 Policy E1 and E2 sets out how the Council will meet their employment needs as identified in the Economic Land Demand forecast produced by Experian (2024) for a net demand of 4,000m² additional office floor space, which can be met by current oversupply of potential 9.5 ha based against extant permissions.

Effective

1.9 Policy SP3 identifies a stepped housing trajectory, delivering at least 1,045 new homes in years 1 to 5, at least 1,268 new homes in years 6 to 10 and at least 3,883 new homes in years 11 to 17. The plan proposes a place-based approach to development with policy and site allocations for each of the settlement areas. The Housing Capacity Topic Paper (2025) identifies that Castle Point has capacity for 6,196 homes over the plan period, in line with Policy SP3 in the Plan.

1.10 Whilst the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP 2025) produced by DAC Planning concludes that there are no significant issues or concern identified which could have an impact on the strategy of the emerging Castle Point Plan, the methodology was based on three growth scenarios previously identified in the Regulation 18 draft plan. It is understood that an addendum will be carried out to provide an update to the document, Basildon Council considers it essential that Castle Point update the IDP accordingly to take full account of the urban renewal and regeneration approach proposed in the Regulation 19 Plan. Therefore, it is vital that the IDP is updated to ensure that sufficient provision for the delivery of new infrastructure is made to support the proposed level of growth.

1.11 Basildon Borough Council believes that it has a proactive working relationship with Castle Point Council demonstrated by the ongoing regular programme of Duty to Cooperate meetings, where any emerging cross boundary issues are fully discussed and addressed by both councils.



Basildon Council

Justified

- 1.12 The urban renewal and regeneration approach with a focus on protecting and enhancing the natural environment has regard to national policies and regional strategies such as the Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) justified through an extensive evidence base. However, Basildon Borough Council questions whether the approach was the most appropriate considering the failure to meet the standard method.
- 1.13 The Green Belt Assessment (July 2025) produced by DAC Planning concludes significant recommendations which the Plan has not taken into consideration. The assessment suggests that the Council could alter the Green Belt boundary in 16 locations, there are 12 sub-areas that are recommended for further consideration for plan-making and 19 out of 31 sub-areas assessed as constitute potential Grey Belt land. Policy GB2 states that the redevelopment of previously developed land in the Green Belt will not constitute inappropriate development when the site is in an area identified as Grey Belt. The Plan could have made provision for housing in the green belt areas as identified by DAC Planning and 34 Green Belt sites assessed in the Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA 2025) in order to meet the standard method figure for housing supply.

Consistent with National Policy

- 1.14 Castle Point's Local Housing Needs Assessment 2023 identifies the Council's objectively assessed housing need to be 255 dwellings per annum or 5,100 dwellings over 2023-2043. Overall, the Plan seeks to provide for a minimum of 6,196 homes over the plan period at an annual average of 354 new homes per annum. Whilst Policy SP3 provides for the local need for housing as per the evidence base assessment, the plan deviates from the national Standard Method. The current Standard Method (November 2024 NPPF) for Castle Point is 686 new dwellings per annum, equating to 11,662 over the Plan period.
- 1.15 Paragraph 6.58 states the exceptional circumstances as justification for failure to meet the Government housing targets as set out by the revised Standard Method. Whilst, Basildon Council understands the constraints particular to Castle Point, the plan is not consistent with national policy and fails to identify reasonable alternatives to address the unmet housing need.

If you have any queries regarding the matters raised in this response, please do not hesitate to contact the Planning Strategy and Implementation team using the details set out at the top of this letter.

Yours sincerely,



Michael Murrel

Assistant Director Planning, Regeneration and Economic Development Basildon Borough Council



Basildon Council

**Enclosure 2: Notes of Duty to Cooperate Meeting of
18 November 2025, and email confirming BC
position on matters detailed**

Duty To Cooperate Meeting Castle Point Borough Council and Basildon Borough Council

Date: 18th November 2025

Attended by:

Castle Point Borough Council

Beth Jones Planning Policy and Climate Action Manager
Rachel Gibbs; Principal Planning Policy Officer

Basildon Borough Council

Mathew Kay: Planning Policy Manager
Lisa Robertson Principal Planner
Sophie Gould Graduate Planner
Nikitha Venu Gopal Graduate Planner

1. Basildon Local Plan Update

- The Reg 18 draft went to cabinet last week and will go to full council next week with a view to go out to consultation on 28th November with a number of local plan public events scheduled through January.
- Reg 19 draft to go out to consultation in March 2026 and hope to complete the consultation before the May 2026 elections
- The Green Belt Study and draft IDP has just been published and can be found on the Basildon Local Plan Evidence base web page
- The Town Centre Masterplan will also go out for public consultation at the same time as the Reg 18 Local Plan consultation
- Additional evidence is being prepared in the Water Cycle Study and an Open Space Assessment which will be in place for the Reg 19.
- Basildon is aiming to deliver its Standard Method Housing Need in full by releasing Green Belt. Basildon made a request to neighbouring authorities to assist Basildon on meeting their housing need, but no authority was able to help so Basildon will be releasing green belt to meet the Standard Method Housing Need.
- Basildon are currently working on their Transport Assessment and the initial modelling shows that the A127 and A13 will be significantly impacted by growth from Basildon and from Essex neighbours. It is likely that this is also in part due to the assumptions arising from the inclusion of the Lower Thames crossing particularly impacting traffic on the A13. The modelling also showed that there is potential for mode shift to public transport alternatives which would help congestion. Basildon are currently doing a feasibility study on the potential for different mitigation options.

Basildon would like to work with Castle Point in respect of improving access to A127 and A13 via public transport

- Currently recruiting 2 new senior planning officers

Action: TC an CPBC to set up a meeting to explore public transport options and a third access from Canvey Island in the new year.

2. Castle Point Plan

- The Reg 19 Consultation was completed on 26th September, however due to a technical error a second Reg 19 consultation had to be conducted and this is in progress and will be completed by 5th December.
- Basildon was informed of the second consultation and have responded that they do not want to change their response a part from adding the wording that it was their final response.
- The Castle Point Plan will go to full cabinet for approval to submit it for examination on 23rd December with papers being published on 16th December. There is PINs check list which will delay its submission by an estimated 2 weeks, consequently the Plan will be submitted for examination in January 2026
- The second Reg 19 consultation has led to an additional 6 weeks being added to the LDS
- Following responses from the Reg 19 consultation and newly published relevant evidence some additional work has been added to evidence Transport Assessment, IDP, WCS, SFRA

Review of CPBC and BC Statement of Common Ground for Castle Point Plan

The SoCG was reviewed during the meeting by LR and provided the following feedback with some areas to be discussed further within the Basildon Planning Team to report back to CPBC next week.

Paragraph	Response
1.1	Agree
1.2	Agree
1.3	Agree
1.4	Agree
1.5	Agree
2.1	Agree
2.2	Agree
2.3	Agree
2.4	Correction CPBC and BBC meet 6 weekly- change from monthly to 6 weekly
2.5	Add to evidence which LPAs collaborated on South Essex Housing Needs Assessment 2022 Biodiversity Essex

	Essex Coastal Forum
2.6	Agree
3.1	Agree
3.2	Agree
3.3	Agree
3.4	Agree
4.1	Agree
4.2	Agree
4.3	Agree
4.4	Agree - comment that LGR is moving at pace and an addendum may be required to this paragraph at a later date
4.5	Agree
4.6	Agree
5.1	Agree
5.2	Agree
6.1	Agree
6.2	Agree
6.3	LR to review with MK
6.4	LR to review with MK
6.5	Agree
7.1	Agree
7.2	Agree
7.3	Add wording in red “ Although potential housing sites were identified by the Green Belt Assessment July 2025, after applying the additional criteria, CPBC considered that none of these were deemed appropriate for development.”
7.4	Agree
7.5	Agree
7.6	Agree
8.1	Agree
8.2	Agree (Subject receiving response to letter from 16 th Sept 2025)
8.3	LR to review with MK
8.4	Agree
9.1	LR to review with MK
10.1	Agree
10.2	Agree
10.3	LR to review with MK
10.4	LR & MK to suggest wording for this paragraph to reflect BBC's position with regards its housing strategy
10.5	Agree
10.6	Agree
11.1	LR to review with MK

12.1	Agree -comment that LGR moving at pace and an addendum may be required to this paragraph
13.1	Agree
14.1	Agree- Comment Michael Murrell to sign but is on annual leave for 1 week. Plus an additional 5 working days cool off following an officer's delegated response will follow before release of signed SoCG

3. South Essex Housing Need Position Statement

- CPBC circulated a draft South Essex Housing Need Position Statement which was discussed at the SEC meeting on 10th November. Awaiting feedback from South Essex authorities including Basildon.

Action: RG to forward the draft to LR to review and provide comments

4. ANOB

- Admin- need to put new dates in calendar for 2026. Next meeting 30th December SG to change to a date in January

From: [Lisa Richardson](#)
To: [Rachel Gibbs](#); [Sophie Gould](#); [Matthew Kay](#); [Sophie Gould](#)
Cc: [Beth Jones](#)
Subject: Re: DtC Minutes 18.11.25
Date: 19 November 2025 16:58:03
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[Outlook-50putdp1](#)

Hi Rachel

It was good to meet you.

I would just clarify transport assessment matters.

Basildon are currently working on their Transport Assessment and the initial modelling shows that the A127 and A13 will be significantly impacted by growth from Basildon and from Essex neighbours. It is likely that this is also in part due to the assumptions arising from the inclusion of the Lower Thames crossing particularly impacting traffic on the A13. The modelling also showed that there is potential for mode shift to public transport alternatives which would help congestion. Basildon are currently doing a feasibility study on the potential for different mitigation options.

Also to confirm we would like to work with Castle Point in respect of improving access to A127 and A13 via public transport but I don't have any comments on a third route of of Canvey. I think we might have had a missunderstanding there.

I've spoken to Matthew Kay about the outstanding SOCG matters. We would request the following changes.

6.3 BC agrees that Castle Point faces constraints in meeting the standard methodology housing need. We would omit 'notable physical and environmental'.

6.4 agreed

8.3 agreed

8.4 agreed

9.1 agreed

10.3 It is agreed that there are evidenced environmental, physical and infrastructure constraints which hinders housing delivery in Castle Point.

10.4 Following BC's September 2025 request for assistance in addressing unmet housing needs BC is seeking to deliver its housing need in full through. This inculdes through amendment of the Green Belt boundaries.

11.1 agreed

I would be happy to discuss any of these further if needed.

Kind Regards

Lisa

Lisa Richardson



From: Rachel Gibbs [REDACTED]
Sent: 19 November 2025 09:44
To: Sophie Gould [REDACTED] Matthew Kay
[REDACTED] Sophie Gould [REDACTED] Lisa
Richardson [REDACTED]
Cc: Beth Jones [REDACTED]
Subject: DtC Minutes 18.11.25

Some people who received this message don't often get email from rgibbs@castlepoint.gov.uk. [Learn why this is important](#)

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi

It was lovely to see you all yesterday, I enclose the draft minutes for you to review.

Let me know if there are any inaccuracies.

Many thanks

Rachel

Rachel Gibbs
Principal Planning Policy Officer
Planning Policy and Climate Action

**Enclosure 3: Email providing final SoCG for signing
date 24 November 2025 and Final Draft SOCG**

From: [Rachel Gibbs](#)
To: [Lisa Richardson](#); [Matthew Kay](#)
Cc: [Beth Jones](#)
Subject: SoCG The Castle Point Plan CPBC and Basildon
Date: 24 November 2025 15:27:00
Attachments: [Duty To Cooperate Meeting Castle Point Borough Council and Basildon Borough Council 18.11.25 Final Draft.docx](#)
[image001.png](#)
[Castle Point Plan - SoCG - CPBC and Basildon BC Final Draft.docx](#)

Dear Lisa and Mathew

Please find enclosed the final draft of SoCG with your amendments for signature and a copy of the minutes of the DtC meeting with your corrections.

Let me know if you have any queries

Kind regards

Rachel

Rachel Gibbs
Principal Planning Policy Officer
Planning Policy and Climate Action





Statement of Common Ground

Castle Point Plan 2026 to 2043

Regulation 19 Pre-Submission Draft

Between

Castle Point Borough Council

and

Basildon Borough Council

Castle Point Local Plan 2026 to 2043

Date:

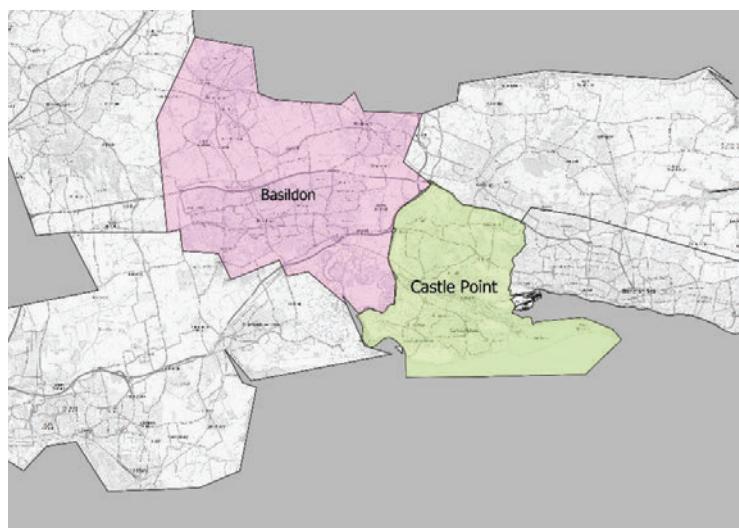
1. Introduction

1.1. This Statement of Common Ground identifies areas of agreement between Castle Point Borough Council (CPBC) and Basildon Borough Council (BC) in relation to the Castle Point Plan 2026-2043 and supporting evidence base. There are no outstanding areas of disagreement.

1.2. This statement has been prepared to assist the examination of the Castle Point Plan. Basildon Borough Council made representations to Regulation 18 Consultation in issues and options and Regulation 19 Publication of the Castle Plan drafts published for consultation on 22nd July 2024 to 16th September 2024 and on 1st August 2025 to 26th September 2025 consecutively. BC confirmed their response to the Regulation 19 further consultation on 28th October 2025. BC representations cover strategic cross boundary issues relating to:

- SP3 Housing Strategy
- Strategic Transport issues
- The Infrastructure Delivery Plan

The map below shows the locations and administrative areas covered by this statement. Castle Point and Basildon are neighbouring authorities in South Essex. They share an administrative boundary to the northeast of Castle Point along the A130 starting at the Fairglen Junction to East Haven Creek towards Canvey Island. Castle Point Borough Council governs the settlements of Canvey Island, Benfleet, Daws Heath, Hadleigh and Thundersley. Basildon Borough Council governs several settlements including Basildon, Billericay and Wickford.



1.3. Essex has two tiers of local government. Essex County Council (ECC) is the upper tier authority, and is responsible for services including education, transport, surface water flooding, libraries, waste management, minerals, and social services. ECC produces a range of strategies guiding the delivery of its services. Development contributions towards new or improved infrastructure which supports ECC services and are outlined within the ECC Developer Guide to Infrastructure Contributions (2024)¹.

1.4. The Castle Point 1998 Adopted Local Plan forms the development plan for the Borough. The Castle Point Plan will cover the period of 2026 to 2043 and aims to grow with a focus on regeneration, brownfield redevelopment and increased density in urban areas whilst protecting its green belt and ensuring that growth is climate resilient and supported by essential infrastructure.

1.5. The Castle Point Plan is scheduled to be delivered according to its Local Development Scheme (LDS), which was updated on July 2025² with the aim to submit the Plan for examination in November 2025. Due to a technology error during the Regulation 19 Consultation, the Council have undertaken a further consultation from 24th October to 5th December 2025. This has delayed the timetable of the Castle Point by six weeks. An updated LDS will be prepared prior to submission.

2. Duty to Cooperate

2.1. The councils of Basildon, Brentwood, Castle Point, Rochford, Southend on Sea, Thurrock and Essex County Council formed a strategic partnership in 2017 to develop a long-term growth ambition which would underpin strategic spatial, infrastructure and economic priorities in South Essex. The collaboration was underpinned by a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in January 2018³ creating the Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA). In 2023 the leaders and Chief Executives agreed to refresh the identity for the partnership which is now known as South Essex Councils (SEC). The SEC's core purpose is to provide leadership for South Essex and to deliver a vision for the region up to 2050⁴ in order to promote healthy growth for South Essex

¹ [Essex County Council Developers Guide to Infrastructure Contributions 2024](#)

² [Local Development Scheme July 2025](#)

³ [MoU Association of South Essex Local Authorities](#)

⁴ <https://www.southessex.org.uk/opportunity-south-essex>

Communities. This is achieved through collaboration, by sharing resources, joint evidence and by lobbying government.

- 2.2. The SEC is supported by the South Essex Joint Officers Group which both CPBC and BC officers attend, and the group meets monthly. Through joint working shared evidence is prepared and strategic issues along with local plan preparations are discussed.
- 2.3. At a regional level the Essex Planning Officers Association represents officers from all 14 local authorities in Essex including CPBC and BC. Planning heads from each local authority meet several times a year to provide leadership and discuss strategic matters across all of Essex. Terms of reference including governance for this decision-making body was agreed in December 2020⁵.
- 2.4. CPBC has one to one six-weekly meetings with BC to consider any specific cross border strategic matters, shared evidence and to appraise each other on their local plan preparation and any potential impacts.
- 2.5. CPBC has also collaborated with BC on various Joint evidence including the South Essex Housing Needs Assessment 2022, the EPOA Planning Policy Statement- Operation Energy and Carbon (Net Zero) October 2025, and the Work of the Essex Climate Action Commission, the Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy and the Essex Recreational Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy. All of Environmental strategies have been implemented across both authorities.
- 2.6. CBPC has fully engaged with BC on the development of its local plan from the outset. In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) regulations (2012), BC has been formally consulted at each stage of consultation on the Castle Point Plan. The Duty to Cooperate Compliance Statement (DATE) outlines in detail the engagement activities and outcomes together with the joint evidence base studies undertaken during the Plan's preparation and any protocols agreed which benefit strategic and cross boundary plan making.

3. Strategic Matters

- 3.1. South Essex's proximity to London and its position on the Thames Estuary have been the major factors behind the historical growth of South Essex and these will continue to be major influences on its future growth and wider relationship with the rest of Essex. Southend Airport, the Port of Tilbury and DP World

⁵ [Chief Officers' Group and EPOA Partnership - Terms of Reference](#)

London Gateway in Thurrock and the forthcoming Lower Thames Crossing which will link Essex via Thurrock to Kent will also provide economic opportunities for the area.

- 3.2. As neighbouring authorities CPBC and BC have a number of shared strategic issues such as housing, transport connections, areas of green belt and other shared infrastructure.
- 3.3. South Essex 2050 Ambition was initiated by the Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA) in 2018 and furthered by South Essex Councils (SEC) and aims to build on South Essex's economic opportunities. Its objectives are to prioritise growth that provides good digital infrastructure, improved transport connectivity, enhanced green and blue infrastructure opportunities, greater commercial development and employment skills and good quality housing in the right places.
- 3.4. The Castle Point Plan's vision and objectives are in accord with the South Essex 2050 Ambition and envisages a borough where residents have good quality and affordable homes in thriving communities with access to green spaces, economic opportunities, and amenities enabling them to fulfil their potential and live happy, healthy lives.
- 3.5. Both CPBC and BC support the vision of South Essex as described in the South Essex 2050 ambition and agree to progress this vision through their plan making.

4. Infrastructure: Strategic transport connections.

- 4.1. The A130 is the shared boundary road between CPBC and BC, it links Howe Green near Chelmsford to the A13 leading to M25 and links to Canvey Way, one of the main routes to Canvey Island.
- 4.2. The Fairglen Interchange is a crucial link to South Essex's Road network and is vital to sustained economic growth of the region and is located on A130. It links to the A127 and A1245, but has reached capacity causing high levels of congestion, slower average speeds and unreliable journey times. Essex Highways has secured £59 Million of funding from the Department of Transport, Essex County Council and the South Essex Local Enterprise Partnership to support a scheme to increase capacity.
- 4.3. Junction Modelling has been included in Castle Point's Transport Assessment report and assessed the likely impacts of planned growth on the highway network in the Castle Point area. This included a high-level analysis of cross

boundary traffic flows on key highway links including Fairglen Interchange and Sadlers Farm Roundabout.

- 4.4. Essex County Council (ECC) is the local Highways and Transportation Authority and is responsible for local transport planning and the provision and maintenance of the highway network for Castle Point. ECC is also preparing the Local Transport Plan, which is currently being updated to LTP4 with the collaboration of all Essex authorities. Essex is currently entering a transitional phase, with the election of a Mayor for Greater Essex and changes to Local Government structures as a result of devolution and local government reform, but Essex County Council with the collaboration of Essex authorities including CPBC and BC are finalising the preparation of LTP4 to support the new structures once they are in place as well as guide the development in emerging local plans.
- 4.5. Both CPBC and BC support and are actively involved in initiatives for improvements to the A130 including Fairglen Interchange. Both Councils agree to have regard for the Local Transport Plan within their local plans.
- 4.6. CPBC and BC agree to continue to work collaboratively to mitigate the cumulative impact of their growth plans on the shared transport routes. Both Councils also agree to work collaboratively with relevant organisations and neighbouring authorities to ensure that the necessary infrastructure is in place to support the growth set out in their Local Plans.

5. Infrastructure Delivery Plan

- 5.1. CPBC has prepared an infrastructure delivery plan May 2025⁶ to support the Castle Point Plan's growth, and this looked at three growth scenarios. The infrastructure delivery plan was prepared in collaboration with the relevant infrastructure providers and is seen as a "living document" and provided a "snapshot" in time based on the growth scenarios being reviewed. Further consultation feedback has led to focusing on one growth scenario with a refinement on the site allocations. An addendum will be provided to the final Infrastructure Delivery Plan for the Castle Point Plan.

- 5.2. CPBC agrees to ensure that infrastructure requirements for its chosen housing strategy and site allocations are appropriately considered

6. Housing Need

⁶ [infrastructure-delivery-plan-idp-may-2025pdf.pdf](#)

6.1. In December 2024, the government introduced changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) along with changes to the standard methodology for calculating housing need, from this the government set mandatory annual housing delivery targets which will require local authorities to plan for significantly more housing within the South Essex area.

6.2. The Standard Method Housing Need requires CPBC to deliver 11,662 dwellings over the planned period of 2026-2043, which equates to an average of 686 dwellings per annum. The annual housing delivery for Castle Point averages at 100 dwellings per annum. Castle Point is 17.4 miles in size with a population density of 4,976 per square mile. Over half of the borough is designated green belt and the majority of the borough is low lying land below sea level resulting in 45% of it in flood zone 3.

6.3. BC agrees that Castle Point faces constraints in meeting the standard methodology housing need

6.4. CPBC has considered what housing delivery can be realistically achieved within its boundaries taking into account its significant environmental and infrastructure restraints as well as its market capacity. The evidence from the Green Belt Assessment, Strategic Land Availability Assessments and the Housing Topic Paper⁷ has identified that CPBC has the capacity to deliver 6,196 homes through the plan period. This is an annual average of 354 homes per annum, which is significantly more than Castle Point's Local Housing Need Assessment which identified that the objectively assessed housing need to be 255 dwellings per annum. CPBC realises that the Castle Point Plan delivers considerably less housing than the Standard Method Housing need but considers based on the evidence that this is a realistic housing delivery. Porter Planning have been commissioned to prepare a further Housing Capacity Research Paper to support this approach. The final version will be available on the website and issued to BC in due course.

6.5. CPBC and BC agree that the Castle Point Plan is proposing a lower housing delivery than the standard Method Housing Need.

7. The Green Belt Assessment

7.1. Following the changes to the NPPF in December 2024, CPBC commissioned the Green Belt Assessment July 2025⁸ as guided by the NPPF to identify potential Grey Belt sites for development. Identified sites were further reviewed against

⁷ Porter Planning Housing Delivery Technical Note Oct 2025

⁸ [Castle Point Green Belt Assessment July 2025](#)

accepted required criteria: designated habitat and heritage sites; flood risk zones; transport restraints e.g. access or requirements for significant upgrades on highways impacting viability; strategic biodiversity opportunity sites and sustainability criteria.

7.2. One of the criteria was to have regard for the Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) in line with the NERC Act 2006 and for the Council to meet its Biodiversity duty. The LNRS has been a significant consideration in the preparation of the Plan and has therefore been a criteria consideration in the site selection process.

7.3. Although potential housing sites were identified by the Green Belt Assessment July 2025, after applying the additional criteria, CPBC considered that none of these were deemed appropriate for development.

7.4. This work has been described in the housing capacity topic paper July 2025⁹. CPBC also prepared, the Strategic Land Availability Assessment July 2025¹⁰ and Site Assessments for Canvey Island¹¹, Benfleet, Hadleigh, Thundersley and Daws Heath¹² July 2025. The approach to site assessments is further supported by the Sustainability Assessment July 2025.¹³

7.5. CPBC has also commissioned the Castle Point Housing Capacity Research Paper Porter Planning Economics October 2025, which concluded that the housing market in Castle Point cannot sustain volume or pace of development required by the Standard Methodology Housing Need.

7.6. BC acknowledges that CPBC has provided the Green Belt Assessment, Strategic Land Availability Assessments and Housing Topic Paper. The Housing Capacity Research Paper will be issued to BC once the final version is published.

8. Unmet Housing Need

8.1. Following the revised NPPF 2024 and the introduction of the new standard methodology for calculating housing need, CPBC contacted its neighbouring authorities including BC in January and February 2025 to assist with meeting the newly calculated housing need. This was in accordance with the Essex Planning

⁹ [Housing Topic Paper July 2025](#)

¹⁰ [Strategic Land Availability Assessment July 2025](#)

¹¹ [Strategic Land Availability Site Assessment Canvey Island July 2025](#)

¹² [Strategic Land Availability Site Assessment Benfleet, Thundersley, Hadleigh, Daws Heath July 2025](#)

¹³ [Sustainability Appraisal Main Report July 2025](#)

Officer's Association (EPOA) Unmet Housing Need protocol 2017. All, including BC, responded with the view that at the time they could not offer any assistance in meeting CPBC's unmet housing needs. The Duty to Cooperate for unmet housing need has been considered where there is evidence of a functional housing market and consequently extends to authorities within South Essex.

8.2. On 16th September 2025 BC contacted CPBC for assistance in meeting their own unmet housing need. At the time that the request was received, the Regulation 19 stage Castle Point Plan was undergoing public consultation. Given that CPBC is not able to identify sufficient sites to meet its own need, it cannot therefore accommodate unmet need arising from BC during the plan period.

8.3. CPBC and BC are working through the South Essex Joint Officers Group to try to address their unmet housing need. Part of this work includes reviewing the EPOA mechanism for considering unmet housing need established in 2017 and providing a shared joint position statement on the housing need within South Essex.

8.4. Both CPBC and BC agree to continue to work collaboratively through SEC to address their unmet housing need within their respective authority areas.

9. Modifications to Castle Point Plan Regulation 19 Draft

9.1. BC through their representation to the Castle Point Plan Regulation 19 Draft have not identified any modifications to the Plan.

10. Areas of Agreement

10.1 CPBC has worked collaboratively with BC to ensure that all cross boundary strategic issues have been properly considered and where appropriate reflected in the Castle Point Plan 2026 to 2043 and effective and ongoing joint working has and will continue to be undertaken.

10.2 It is agreed that the Castle Point Plan 2026-2043 does not allocate sufficient sites to meet the Standard Methodology Housing Need for housing at this time.

10.3 It is agreed that there are evidenced environmental, physical and infrastructure constraints which hinders housing delivery in Castle Point.

10.4 Following BC's September 2025 request for assistance in addressing unmet housing needs BC is seeking to deliver its housing need in full. This includes through amendment of the Green Belt boundaries.

10.5 CPBC and BC agree to continue to work collaboratively through SEC to address their unmet housing need within their respective authority areas.

10.6 It is agreed that infrastructure requirements need to be considered carefully to ensure that they support Castle Point's growth plans. CPBC and BC will work collaboratively to address the cumulative impact of their growth plans on shared highways and with all relevant organisations and neighbouring authorities to enable growth.

11 Areas of Uncommon Ground

11.1 Through the Duty to Cooperate, CPBC and BC have jointly considered issues relating to housing, gypsy and traveller needs, jobs and employment, retail and tourism, natural environment, strategic site allocations and the sustainability appraisal. There are currently no areas of uncommon ground in relation to these topics.

12 Additional Strategic Matters

12.1 There are no additional strategic matters which CPBC and BC are aware of which has not already been addressed by this Statement of Common Ground.

13 Monitoring

13.1 This statement will be maintained by CPBC and updated as necessary.

14 Signatories

14.1 The signatories agree that the Castle Point Plan has been prepared in accordance with the "Duty to Cooperate" imposed by Section 33A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 in that the Council has cooperated with BC as a neighbouring authority, through constructive and ongoing engagement on the impacts of sustainable development set out in the Duty to Cooperate Statement of Compliance and that there are no outstanding strategic planning issues to be addressed.

Signature

Name

Date

Castle Point Borough Council

Signature

Name

Date

Basildon Borough Council

Enclosure 4: Email confirming that the final draft SoCG had been received and sign-off would be sought

From: [Lisa Richardson](#)
To: [Rachel Gibbs](#)
Subject: Re: SoCG The Castle Point Plan CPBC and Basildon
Date: 25 November 2025 18:18:43
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[Outlook-dukzxl2b](#)

Thank you

I'll confirm when it has been signed.

Kind Regards

Lisa

Lisa Richardson

Principal Planner, Strategy and Implementation

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



From: Rachel Gibbs [REDACTED]
Sent: 24 November 2025 15:27
To: Lisa Richardson [REDACTED] Matthew Kay
[REDACTED]
Cc: Beth Jones [REDACTED]
Subject: SoCG The Castle Point Plan CPBC and Basildon

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Lisa and Mathew

Please find enclosed the final draft of SoCG with your amendments for signature and a copy of the minutes of the DtC meeting with your corrections.

Let me know if you have any queries

Kind regards

Rachel

Rachel Gibbs

Principal Planning Policy Officer

Planning Policy and Climate Action



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Enclosures 5 to 7: Email trail showing the Council pursuing sign-off of the SoCG by BC, and confirmation that it was being addressed through BC governance processes

From: [Michael Murrell](#)
To: [Rachel Gibbs](#)
Cc: [Robert Davy](#); [Matthew Kay](#); [Christine Lyons](#); [Lisa Richardson](#)
Subject: RE: SoCG The Castle Point Plan CPBC and Basildon
Date: 10 December 2025 13:15:44
Attachments: [image004.png](#)

[REDACTED]

I will follow up with the team and ensure the signed document is across with you today.

Michael Murrell

Assistant Director Planning, Regeneration & Economic Development | Basildon Borough Council

[REDACTED] | www.basildon.gov.uk
Facebook: [@basildonboroughcouncil](#) | Twitter: [@BasildonCouncil](#)

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From: Rachel Gibbs [REDACTED]
Sent: 10 December 2025 11:26
To: Michael Murrell [REDACTED]
Cc: Robert Davy [REDACTED]; Matthew Kay [REDACTED]
Christine Lyons [REDACTED]; Lisa Richardson [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: SoCG The Castle Point Plan CPBC and Basildon

Some people who received this message don't often get email from rgibbs@castlepoint.gov.uk. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear Michael

Just an email re the outstanding signed SoCG, which I understand you will be signing. The email below indicated that we would receive the signed SoCG yesterday, but nothing has arrived. Basildon is the last remaining neighbouring authority SoCG we are waiting on.

[REDACTED] could you please forward the signed SoCG to me today.

Many thanks for your help in this matter.

Kindest regards

Rachel

Rachel Gibbs
Principal Planning Policy Officer
Planning Policy and Climate Action



From: Lisa Richardson [REDACTED]
Sent: 08 December 2025 18:06
To: Amanda Parrott [REDACTED]; Matthew Kay [REDACTED]; Michael Murrell <[REDACTED]>
Cc: Robert Davy [REDACTED] | Rachel Gibbs [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: SoCG The Castle Point Plan CPBC and Basildon

Good Afternoon Amanda

I hope you are well.

Just to update you. We are happy to sign this but we are just waiting confirmation from our Democratic Services team that there are no further governance requirements.

I am hoping to have confirmation of this tomorrow (9/12).

Thank you

Kind Regards

Lisa

Lisa Richardson

Basildon Borough Council



From: Amanda Parrott [REDACTED]
Sent: 05 December 2025 14:44
To: Matthew Kay [REDACTED]; Michael Murrell [REDACTED]
Cc: Lisa Richardson [REDACTED]; Robert Davy [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]; Rachel Gibbs [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: SoCG The Castle Point Plan CPBC and Basildon

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Matthew and Michael,

I hope this email finds you both well.

I am wondering if you could assist at all. Officers from Basildon and Castle Point have been working cooperatively and constructively to address strategic plan making matters and have agreed in principle a Statement of Common Ground as it relates to the Regulation 19 Castle Point Plan. A copy of this is attached.

We are progressing towards a Council meeting on the 23 December at which time our Council will take a decision on the submission of the Castle Point Plan for examination in public. We are looking to have all the relevant Statements of Common Ground signed and in place in time for the publication of the reports for that meeting in a weeks' time.

It appears that the Statement of Common Ground with Basildon is not yet signed and I wonder if you could ensure that this is reviewed, signed, and returned to us early next week, as this will enable us to finalise the Duty to Cooperate Statement and the report to Council.

Your support to expedite this matter would be most gratefully appreciated.

Kind regards,

Amanda Parrott

Assistant Director, Climate and Growth
Place and Communities
www.castlepoint.gov.uk



From: Rachel Gibbs [REDACTED]
Sent: 04 December 2025 16:11
To: Lisa Richardson [REDACTED]; Matthew Kay [REDACTED]
Cc: Amanda Parrott [REDACTED]; Beth Jones [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: SoCG The Castle Point Plan CPBC and Basildon

Hi Lisa and Mathew

Could you let me know if we will receive a signed copy of the SoCG tomorrow?

Many thanks

Kind regards

Rachel

Rachel Gibbs
Principal Planning Policy Officer
Planning Policy and Climate Action

[REDACTED]
www.castlepoint.gov.uk



From: Lisa Richardson [REDACTED]
Sent: 25 November 2025 18:20
To: Rachel Gibbs [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: SoCG The Castle Point Plan CPBC and Basildon

Hi Matthew

Have you confirmed if you can sign this or if it is Michael?

Thanks

Lisa

Lisa Richardson

Principal Planner, Strategy and Implementation



From: Lisa Richardson <[REDACTED]>

Sent: 25 November 2025 18:18

To: Rachel Gibbs [REDACTED]

Subject: Re: SoCG The Castle Point Plan CPBC and Basildon

Thank you

I'll confirm when it has been signed.

Kind Regards

Lisa

Lisa Richardson

Principal Planner, Strategy and Implementation

Basildon Borough Council

?

From: Rachel Gibbs [REDACTED]
Sent: 24 November 2025 15:27
To: Lisa Richardson [REDACTED]; Matthew Kay [REDACTED]
Cc: Beth Jones [REDACTED]
Subject: SoCG The Castle Point Plan CPBC and Basildon

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Dear Lisa and Mathew

Please find enclosed the final draft of SoCG with your amendments for signature and a copy of the minutes of the DtC meeting with your corrections.

Let me know if you have any queries

Kind regards

Rachel

Rachel Gibbs
Principal Planning Policy Officer
Planning Policy and Climate Action
[REDACTED]

www.castlepoint.gov.uk

?

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**Enclosure 8: Emails of 12 and 15 December 2025
following up on the SoCG progress through
governance processes at BC**

From: [Rachel Gibbs](#)
To: [Michael Murrell](#)
Cc: [Robert Davy](#); [Matthew Kay](#); [Christine Lyons](#); [Lisa Richardson](#); [Amanda Parrott](#)
Subject: RE: SoCG The Castle Point Plan CPBC and Basildon
Date: 15 December 2025 16:51:03
Attachments: [image002.png](#)

Hi Michael

Do you have any updates on this?

Many thanks

Kind regards

Rachel

Rachel Gibbs
Principal Planning Policy Officer
Planning Policy and Climate Action

www.castlepoint.gov.uk

From: Rachel Gibbs
Sent: 12 December 2025 09:29
To: Michael Murrell [REDACTED]
Cc: Robert Davy [REDACTED]; Matthew Kay [REDACTED]
Christine Lyons [REDACTED]; Lisa Richardson [REDACTED]
Ian Butt [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: SoCG The Castle Point Plan CPBC and Basildon

Dear Michael

Following my telephone call yesterday, I understand that the Castle Point and Basildon SoCG is to be signed by your portfolio holder this week and this will be followed by a 5 working day scrutiny period. In the meantime, in order to meet our deadline for cabinet reports, could you please provide an email holding statement today . Suggested wording below.

Please accept this email as a holding response from Basildon Council in relation

to the Castle Point Borough Council and Basildon Council Statement of Common Ground Final Draft with reference to the Castle Point Plan 2026-2043 . The Statement of Common Ground has been discussed and agreed in a meeting of 18th November 2025 and Basildon Council is in agreement with the Statement of Common Ground subject to the democratic processes at Basildon Council.

Many thanks for your help with this matter

Kindest regards

Rachel

Rachel Gibbs

Principal Planning Policy Officer

Planning Policy and Climate Action

 www.castlepoint.gov.uk



Enclosure 9: Email confirmation from BC on 18 December 2025 that SoCG was in governance process

From: [Rachel Gibbs](#)
To: [Michael Murrell](#)
Cc: [Robert Davy](#); [Matthew Kay](#); [Christine Lyons](#); [Lisa Richardson](#); [Amanda Parrott](#)
Subject: RE: SoCG The Castle Point Plan CPBC and Basildon
Date: 18 December 2025 16:40:04
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Hi Michael

I understand the decision re the SoCG was due today to begin a 5 day call-in, but I can't seem to find your CMDR regarding the Statement of Common Ground. Could you send me the link please?

I can find this but it only displays ODRs. [Basildon Council - , 5 December 2025 - 19 December 2025](#)

Many thanks for your help

Kind regards

Rachel
Rachel Gibbs
Principal Planning Policy Officer
Planning Policy and Climate Action

www.castlepoint.gov.uk

From: Rachel Gibbs
Sent: 15 December 2025 16:51
To: 'Michael Murrell'
Cc: Robert Davy | 'Matthew Kay'
Christine Lyons | 'Lisa Richardson'
Amanda Parrott
Subject: RE: SoCG The Castle Point Plan CPBC and Basildon

Hi Michael

Do you have any updates on this?

Many thanks

Kind regards

Rachel

Rachel Gibbs

Principal Planning Policy Officer

Planning Policy and Climate Action

www.castlepoint.gov.uk

From: Rachel Gibbs

Sent: 12 December 2025 09:29

To: Michael Murrell <[REDACTED]>

Cc: Robert Davy <[REDACTED]>; Matthew Kay <[REDACTED]>;

Christine Lyons <[REDACTED]>; Lisa Richardson

<[REDACTED]>; Ian Butt <[REDACTED]>

Subject: RE: SoCG The Castle Point Plan CPBC and Basildon

Dear Michael

Following my telephone call yesterday, I understand that the Castle Point and Basildon SoCG is to be signed by your portfolio holder this week and this will be followed by a 5 working day scrutiny period. In the meantime, in order to meet our deadline for cabinet reports, could you please provide an email holding statement today . Suggested wording below.

Please accept this email as a holding response from Basildon Council in relation to the Castle Point Borough Council and Basildon Council Statement of Common Ground Final Draft with reference to the Castle Point Plan 2026-2043 . The Statement of Common Ground has been discussed and agreed in a meeting of 18th November 2025 and Basildon Council is in agreement with the Statement of Common Ground subject to the democratic processes at Basildon Council.

Many thanks for your help with this matter

Kindest regards

Rachel

Rachel Gibbs

Principal Planning Policy Officer

Planning Policy and Climate Action

 www.castlepoint.gov.uk



Enclosure 10: Email of 22 December 2025 setting out a revised SoCG proposed by BC

From: [Lisa Richardson](#)
To: [Rachel Gibbs](#); [Michael Murrell](#)
Cc: [Robert Davy](#); [Matthew Kay](#); [Christine Lyons](#); [Amanda Parrott](#)
Subject: RE: SoCG The Castle Point Plan CPBC and Basildon
Date: 22 December 2025 20:57:10
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[Castle Point Plan - SoCG - CPBC and Basildon clean 22122025.docx](#)
[Castle Point Plan - SoCG - CPBC and Basildon Changes 22122025.docx](#)

Good Morning Rachel

Further to discussion with Matthew Kay, we have reviewed the draft SOCG with our Cabinet Member and our KC and made a number of changes to reflect our current position in respect of meeting housing need.

We would agree to enter the revised SOCG attached. I've also attached a version showing tracked changes to help with your review.

We are currently still undergoing our governance process to complete the sign off process for this document, but it can be provided to your Members as a draft subject to governance procedures.

I hope this meets your needs.

Kind Regards

Lisa

Lisa Richardson
Principal Planner, Strategy and Implementation
[REDACTED]

Basildon Borough Council
[REDACTED]



**Enclosure 11: Screenshot of CMDR in BC
Modern.gov system and CMDR for SoCG dated 24
December 2025**

CMDR Basildon Council

https://www.basildonmeetings.info/eDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=7641

Decision details

H105-25 CMDR Statement of Common Ground with Castle Point Borough Council

- Find out more about this issue

Decision Maker: Cabinet Member for Housing & Infrastructure

Decision status: Recommendations Approved

Is Key decision? No

Is subject to call in? Yes

Purpose:
The Statement of Common Ground between Basildon Borough Council and Castle Point District Council respect of the New Local Plan for Castle Point. This sets out the topics we have discussed, any areas we are both in agreement about and what our agreed next steps are.

Decision:
To enter into a Statement of Common Ground with Castle Point Borough Council in respect of the New Local Plan for Castle Point as set out in Enc.1

Publication date: 24/12/2025

Date of decision: 24/12/2025

Effective from: 06/01/2026

Accompanying Documents:

- Statement of Common Ground with Castle Point Borough Council [PDF 150 KB](#)
- Statement of Common Ground with Castle Point Borough Council enc. 1 [PDF 162 KB](#)
- Enc. 2 for Statement of Common Ground with Castle Point Borough Council [PDF 217 KB](#)

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CABINET MEMBER DECISION RECORD

Record of Decision of the Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for Housing & Infrastructure

Statement of Common Ground with Castle Point Borough Council

Decision: To enter into a Statement of Common Ground with Castle Point Borough Council in respect of the New Local Plan for Castle Point as set out in Enc.1

Reasons for Decision:

Strategic policy-making authorities are required to cooperate with each other when preparing, or supporting the preparation of policies which address strategic matters. This includes those policies contained in local plans (including minerals and waste plans), spatial development strategies, and marine plans.

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out that these authorities should produce, maintain, and update one or more statement(s) of common ground, throughout the plan-making process (Planning Practice Guidance Paragraph: 009 Reference ID: 61-009-20190315).

A statement of common ground is a written record of the progress made by strategic policy-making authorities during the process of planning for strategic cross-boundary matters. It documents where effective co-operation is and is not happening throughout the plan-making process and is a way of demonstrating at examination that plans are deliverable over the plan period and based on effective joint working across local authority boundaries. In the case of local planning authorities, it also forms part of the evidence required to demonstrate that they have complied with the duty to cooperate (Planning Practice Guidance Paragraph: 010 Reference ID: 61-010-20190315)

The Draft Statement of Common Ground is set out in Enc.1 has been prepared to assist the examination of the Castle Point Plan and identifies areas of agreement between Castle Point Borough Council (CPBC) and Basildon Borough Council (BC) in relation to the Castle Point Plan 2026-2043 and supporting evidence base. It sets out in full the following key points:

- Both CPBC and BC support the vision of South Essex as described in the South Essex 2050 ambition and agree to progress this vision through their plan making.
- CPBC and BC agree to continue to work collaboratively to mitigate the cumulative impact of their growth plans on the shared transport routes. Both Councils also agree to work collaboratively with relevant organisations and neighbouring

authorities to ensure that the necessary infrastructure is in place to support the growth set out in their Local Plans.

- CPBC agrees to ensure that infrastructure requirements for its chosen housing strategy and site allocations are appropriately considered
- CPBC and BC agree that the Castle Point Plan is proposing a lower housing delivery than the standard Method Housing Need. CPBC contacted its neighbouring authorities including BC in January and February 2025 to assist with meeting the newly calculated housing need. This was in accordance with the Essex Planning Officer's Association (EPOA) Unmet Housing Need protocol 2017. All, including BC, responded with the view that at the time they could not offer any assistance in meeting CPBC's unmet housing needs.
- On 16th September 2025 BC contacted CPBC for assistance in meeting their own unmet housing need. Given that CPBC is not able to identify sufficient sites to meet its own need, it cannot therefore accommodate unmet need arising from BC during the plan period.
- The revised housing capacity put forward by CPBC is currently untested and places a burden on neighbouring authorities. BC considers that further work is needed to address this reduction and review the options of increased density on sites to increase housing numbers and making the best use of land including Green Belt land. BC has significant growth targets over its plan period and is unable to deliver any of the additionality which would fall from CPBC.
- CPBC state that a potential housing sites were identified by the Green Belt Assessment July 2025, after applying the additional criteria, none of these were deemed appropriate for development. BC consider further evidence is required to rule out development within these areas of green belt. Recent appeal decisions undermine CPBC's position.
- CPBC has also commissioned the Castle Point Housing Capacity Research Paper Porter Planning Economics October 2025, which concluded that the housing market in Castle Point cannot sustain volume or pace of development required by the Standard Methodology Housing Need. At the time of writing this is not in the public domain and as such BC does not agree with this position.
- Following the devolution process, opportunities for joint working will be dependent on the nature of the devolution boundary changes. BC will continue to work across Local Planning Authorities across Essex on strategic matters.
- BC is expecting to meet its full unconstrained standard method plus a buffer within its own boundary.
- Through the Duty to Cooperate, CPBC and BC have jointly considered issues relating to housing, gypsy and traveller needs, jobs and employment, retail and tourism, natural environment, strategic site allocations and the sustainability appraisal.

- BC considers that the impact of the constrained housing numbers that CPBC are proposing are a matter that requires further discussion around: -
 - 1)the impact on the housing delivered within BC, and
 - 2)the infrastructure demands that CPBC will place on BC through this under delivery.

Alternatives Considered and Rejected:

Do not sign a Statement of Common Ground with Castle Point Borough Council- This is not recommended because it would not meet the obligation to demonstrate effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters as set out in Planning Practice Guidance Paragraph: 009 Reference ID: 61-009-20190315.

Is this Decision Eligible for Call In?:

Yes No

Declaration of Interest:

N/a

Date of Decision -

24/12/25

Enclosure 12: Revised SoCG (not agreed with the Council)



Statement of Common Ground

Castle Point Plan 2026 to 2043

Regulation 19 Pre-Submission Draft

Between

Castle Point Borough Council

and

Basildon Borough Council

Castle Point Local Plan 2026 to 2043

Date:

1. Introduction

This Statement of Common Ground identifies areas of agreement between Castle Point Borough Council (CPBC) and Basildon Borough Council (BC) in relation to the Castle Point Plan 2026-2043 and supporting evidence base.

1.1. This statement has been prepared to assist the examination of the Castle Point Plan. Basildon Borough Council made representations to Regulation 18 Consultation in issues and options and Regulation 19 Publication of the Castle Plan drafts published for consultation on 22nd July 2024 to 16th September 2024 and on 1st August 2025 to 26th September 2025 consecutively. BC confirmed their response to the Regulation 19 further consultation on 28th October 2025. BC representations cover strategic cross boundary issues relating to:

- SP3 Housing Strategy
- Strategic Transport issues
- The Infrastructure Delivery Plan

The map below shows the locations and administrative areas covered by this statement. Castle Point and Basildon are neighbouring authorities in South Essex. They share an administrative boundary to the northeast of Castle Point along the A130 starting at the Fairglen Junction to East Haven Creek towards Canvey Island. Castle Point Borough Council governs the settlements of Canvey Island, Benfleet, Daws Heath, Hadleigh and Thundersley. Basildon Borough Council governs several settlements including Basildon, Billericay and Wickford.

INSERT MAP

1.2. Essex has two tiers of local government. Essex County Council (ECC) is the upper tier authority, and is responsible for services including education, transport, surface water flooding, libraries, waste management, minerals, and social services. ECC produces a range of strategies guiding the delivery of its services. Development contributions towards new or improved infrastructure which supports ECC services and are outlined within the ECC Developer Guide to Infrastructure Contributions (2024)¹.

1.3. The Castle Point 1998 Adopted Local Plan forms the development plan for the Borough. The Castle Point Plan will cover the period of 2026 to 2043 and aims to

¹ [Essex County Council Developers Guide to Infrastructure Contributions 2024](#)

grow with a focus on regeneration, brownfield redevelopment and increased density in urban areas whilst protecting its green belt and ensuring that growth is climate resilient and supported by essential infrastructure.

1.4. The Castle Point Plan is scheduled to be delivered according to its Local Development Scheme (LDS), which was updated on July 2025² with the aim to submit the Plan for examination in November 2025. Due to a technology error during the Regulation 19 Consultation, the Council have undertaken a further consultation from 24th October to 5th December 2025. This has delayed the timetable of the Castle Point by six weeks. An updated LDS will be prepared prior to submission.

2. Duty to Cooperate

2.1. The councils of Basildon, Brentwood, Castle Point, Rochford, Southend on Sea, Thurrock and Essex County Council formed a strategic partnership in 2017 to develop a long-term growth ambition which would underpin strategic spatial, infrastructure and economic priorities in South Essex. The collaboration was underpinned by a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in January 2018³ creating the Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA). In 2023 the leaders and Chief Executives agreed to refresh the identity for the partnership which is now known as South Essex Councils (SEC). The SEC's core purpose is to provide leadership for South Essex and to deliver a vision for the region up to 2050⁴ in order to promote healthy growth for South Essex Communities. This is achieved through collaboration, by sharing resources, joint evidence and by lobbying government.

2.2. The SEC is supported by the South Essex Joint Officers Group which both CPBC and BC officers attend, and the group meets monthly. Through joint working shared evidence is prepared and strategic issues along with local plan preparations are discussed.

2.3. At a regional level the Essex Planning Officers Association represents officers from all 14 local authorities in Essex including CPBC and BC. Planning heads from each local authority meet several times a year to provide leadership and discuss strategic matters across all of Essex. Terms of reference including governance for this decision-making body was agreed in December 2020⁵.

² [Local Development Scheme July 2025](#)

³ [MoU Association of South Essex Local Authorities](#)

⁴ <https://www.southessex.org.uk/opportunity-south-essex>

⁵ [Chief Officers' Group and EPOA Partnership - Terms of Reference](#)

- 2.4. CPBC has one to one monthly meetings with BC to consider any specific cross border strategic matters, shared evidence and to appraise each other on their local plan preparation and any potential impacts.
- 2.5. CPBC has also collaborated with BC on various environmental strategy documents, and these include the EPOA Planning Policy Statement- Operation Energy and Carbon (Net Zero) October 2025, and the Work of the Essex Climate Action Commission, the Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy and the Essex Recreational Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy. All of which have been implemented across both authorities.
- 2.6. CBPC has fully engaged with BC on the development of its local plan from the outset. In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) regulations, BC has been formally consulted at each stage of consultation on the Castle Point Plan. The Duty to Cooperate Compliance Statement (DATE) outlines in detail the engagement activities and outcomes together with the joint evidence base studies undertaken during the Plan's preparation and any protocols agreed which benefit strategic and cross boundary plan making.

3. Strategic Matters

- 3.1. South Essex's proximity to London and its position on the Thames Estuary have been the major factors behind the historical growth of South Essex and these will continue to be major influences on its future growth and wider relationship with the rest of Essex. Southend Airport, the Port of Tilbury and DP World London Gateway in Thurrock and the forthcoming Lower Thames Crossing which will link Essex via Thurrock to Kent will also provide economic opportunities for the area.
- 3.2. As neighbouring authorities CPBC and BC have a number of shared strategic issues such as housing, transport connections, areas of green belt and other shared infrastructure.
- 3.3. South Essex 2050 Ambition was initiated by the Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA) in 2018 and furthered by South Essex Councils (SEC) and aims to build on South Essex's economic opportunities. Its objectives are to prioritise growth that provides good digital infrastructure, improved transport connectivity, enhanced green and blue infrastructure opportunities, greater commercial development and employment skills and good quality housing in the right places.

3.4. The Castle Point Plan's vision and objectives are in accord with the South Essex 2050 Ambition and envisages a borough where residents have good quality and affordable homes in thriving communities with access to green spaces, economic opportunities, and amenities enabling them to fulfil their potential and live happy, healthy lives.

3.5. Both CPBC and BC support the vision of South Essex as described in the South Essex 2050 ambition and agree to progress this vision through their plan making.

4. Infrastructure: Strategic transport connections.

4.1. The A130 is the shared boundary road between CPBC and BC, it links Howe Green near Chelmsford to the A13 leading to M25 and links to Canvey Way one of the main routes to Canvey Island.

4.2. The Fairglen Interchange is a crucial link to South Essex's Road network and is vital to sustained economic growth of the region and is located on A130. It links to the A127 and A1245, but has reached capacity causing high levels of congestion, slower average speeds and unreliable journey times. Essex Highways has secured £59 Million of funding from the Department of Transport, Essex County Council and the South Essex Local Enterprise Partnership to support a scheme to increase capacity.

4.3. Junction Modelling has been included in Castle Point's Transport Assessment report and assessed the likely impacts of planned growth on the highway network in the Castle Point area. This included a high-level analysis of cross boundary traffic flows on key highway links including Fairglen Interchange and Sadlers Farm Roundabout.

4.4. Essex County Council (ECC) is the local Highways and Transportation Authority and is responsible for local transport planning and the provision and maintenance of the highway network for Castle Point. ECC is also preparing the Local Transport Plan, which is currently being updated to LTP4 with the collaboration of all Essex authorities. Essex is currently entering a transitional phase, with the election of a Mayor for Greater Essex and changes to Local Government structures as a result of devolution and local government reform, but Essex County Council with the collaboration of Essex authorities including CPBC and BC are finalising the preparation of LTP4 to support the new structures once they are in place as well as guide the development in emerging local plans.

4.5. Both CPBC and BC support and are actively involved in initiatives for improvements to the A130 including Fairglen Interchange. Both Councils agree to have regard for the Local Transport Plan within their local plans.

4.6. CPBC and BC agree to continue to work collaboratively to mitigate the cumulative impact of their growth plans on the shared transport routes. Both Councils also agree to work collaboratively with relevant organisations and neighbouring authorities to ensure that the necessary infrastructure is in place to support the growth set out in their Local Plans.

5. Infrastructure Delivery Plan

5.1. CPBC has prepared an infrastructure delivery plan May 2025⁶ to support the Castle Point Plan's growth, and this looked at three growth scenarios. The infrastructure delivery plan was prepared in collaboration with the relevant infrastructure providers and is seen as a "living document" and provided a "snapshot" in time based on the growth scenarios being reviewed. Further consultation feedback has led to focusing on one growth scenario with a refinement on the site allocations. An addendum will be provided to the final Infrastructure Delivery Plan for the Castle Point Plan.

5.2. CPBC agrees to ensure that infrastructure requirements for its chosen housing strategy and site allocations are appropriately considered

6. Housing Need

6.1. In December 2024, the government introduced changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) along with changes to the standard methodology for calculating housing need, from this the government set mandatory annual housing delivery targets which will require local authorities to plan for significantly more housing within the South Essex area.

6.2. The mandatory housing delivery for CPBC over the planned period of 2026-2043 is 11,662, which equates to an average of 686 dwellings per annum. The annual housing delivery for Castle Point averages at 100 dwellings per annum. Castle Point is 17.4 miles in size with a population density of 4,976 per square mile. Over half of the borough is designated green belt and the majority of the borough is low lying land below sea level resulting in 45% of it in flood zone 3.

6.3. CPBC has considered what housing delivery can be realistically achieved within its boundaries taking into account its significant environmental and infrastructure restraints as well as its market capacity. The evidence from the Green Belt Assessment, Strategic Land Availability Assessments and the

⁶ [infrastructure-delivery-plan-idp-may-2025.pdf](https://www.essex.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2025-05/Infrastructure-delivery-plan-idp-may-2025.pdf)

Housing Topic Paper⁷ has identified that CPBC has the capacity to deliver 6,196 homes through the plan period. This is an annual average of 354 homes per annum, which is significantly more than Castle Point's Local Housing Need Assessment which identified that the objectively assessed housing need to be 255 dwellings per annum. CPBC realises that the Castle Point Plan delivers considerably less housing than the Standard Method housing need but considers based on the evidence that this is a realistic housing delivery. Porter Planning have been commissioned to prepare a further Housing Capacity Research Paper to support this approach. The final version will be available on the website and issued to BC in due course.

6.4. The revised housing capacity put forward by CPBC is currently untested and places a burden on neighbouring authorities. BC considers that further work is needed to address this reduction and review the options of increased density on sites to increase housing numbers and making the best use of land including Green Belt land BC has significant growth targets over its plan period and is unable to deliver any of the additionality which would fall from CPBC.

7. The Green Belt Assessment

7.1. Following the changes to the NPPF in December 2024, CPBC commissioned the Green Belt Assessment July 2025⁸ as guided by the NPPF to identify potential Grey Belt sites for development. Identified sites were further reviewed against accepted required criteria: designated habitat and heritage sites; flood risk zones; transport restraints e.g. access or requirements for significant upgrades on highways impacting viability; strategic biodiversity opportunity sites and sustainability criteria.

7.2. One of the criteria was to have regard for the Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) in line with the NERC Act 2006 and for the Council to meet its Biodiversity duty. The LNRS has been a significant consideration in the preparation of the Plan and has therefore been a criteria consideration in the site selection process.

7.3. CPBC state that a potential housing sites were identified by the Green Belt Assessment July 2025, after applying the additional criteria, none of these were deemed appropriate for development. BC consider further evidence is required to rule out development within these areas of green belt. Recent appeal decisions undermine CPBC's position.

⁷ Porter Planning Housing Delivery Technical Note Oct 2025

⁸ [Castle Point Green Belt Assessment July 2025](#)

7.4. This work has been described in the housing capacity topic paper July 2025⁹. CPBC also prepared, the Strategic Land Availability Assessment July 2025¹⁰ and Site Assessments for Canvey Island¹¹, Benfleet, Hadleigh, Thundersley and Daws Heath¹² July 2025. The approach to site assessments is further supported by the Sustainability Assessment July 2025.¹³

7.5. CPBC has also commissioned the Castle Point Housing Capacity Research Paper Porter Planning Economics October 2025, which concluded that the housing market in Castle Point cannot sustain volume or pace of development required by the Standard Methodology Housing Need. At the time of writing this is not in the public domain and as such BC does not agree with this position.

7.6. BC acknowledges that CPBC has provided part of the evidence namely the Green Belt Assessment, Strategic Land Availability Assessments and Housing Topic Paper. The Housing Capacity Research Paper will be issued to BC once the final version is published.

8. Unmet Housing Need

8.1. Following the revised NPPF 2024 and the introduction of the new standard methodology for calculating housing need, CPBC contacted its neighbouring authorities including BC in January and February 2025 to assist with meeting the newly calculated housing need. This was in accordance with the Essex Planning Officer's Association (EPOA) Unmet Housing Need protocol 2017. All, including BC, responded with the view that at the time they could not offer any assistance in meeting CPBC's unmet housing needs.

8.2. Following the devolution process, opportunities for joint working will be dependent on the nature of the devolution boundary changes. BC will continue to work across Local Planning Authorities across Essex on strategic matters.

9. Modifications to Castle Point Plan Regulation 19 Draft

9.1. BC through their representation to the Castle Point Plan Regulation 19 Draft have not identified any modifications to the Plan.

10. Areas of Agreement

⁹ [Housing Topic Paper July 2025](#)

¹⁰ [Strategic Land Availability Assessment July 2025](#)

¹¹ [Strategic Land Availability Site Assessment Canvey Island July 2025](#)

¹² [Strategic Land Availability Site Assessment Benfleet, Thundersley, Hadleigh, Daws Heath July 2025](#)

¹³ [Sustainability Appraisal Main Report July 2025](#)

- 10.1. CPBC has worked collaboratively with BC to ensure that all cross boundary strategic issues have been properly considered and where appropriate reflected in the Castle Point Plan 2026 to 2043 and effective and ongoing joint working has and will continue to be undertaken.
- 10.2. It is agreed that the Castle Point Plan 2026-2043 does not allocate sufficient sites to meet the Standard Methodology Housing Need for housing at this time.
- 10.3. Following BC's September 2025 request for assistance in addressing unmet housing needs, BC is expecting to meet its full unconstrained standard method plus a buffer within its own boundary.
- 10.4. It is agreed that infrastructure requirements need to be considered carefully to ensure that they support Castle Point's growth plans. CPBC and BC will work collaboratively to address the cumulative impact of their growth plans on shared highways and with all relevant organisations and neighbouring authorities to enable growth.

11 Areas of Uncommon Ground

- 11.1 Through the Duty to Cooperate, CPBC and BC have jointly considered issues relating to housing, gypsy and traveller needs, jobs and employment, retail and tourism, natural environment, strategic site allocations and the sustainability appraisal. BC considers that the impact of the constrained housing numbers that CPBC are proposing are a matter that requires further discussion around: -
 - 1)the impact on the housing delivered within BC, and
 - 2)the infrastructure demands that CPBC will place on BC through this under delivery.

12 Additional Strategic Matters

- 12.1 There are no additional strategic matters which CPBC and BC are aware of which has not already been addressed by this Statement of Common Ground.

13 Monitoring

- 13.1 This statement will be maintained by CPBC and updated as necessary.

14 Signatories

- 14.1 The signatories agree that the Castle Point Plan has been prepared in accordance with the "Duty to Cooperate" imposed by Section 33A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 in that the Council has cooperated with BC as a neighbouring authority, through constructive and ongoing engagement on the impacts of sustainable development set out in the Duty to Cooperate Statement of

Compliance and that there are no outstanding strategic planning issues to be addressed.

Castle Point Borough Council

Basildon Borough Council

DRAFT

**Enclosure 13: Email from BC dated 6 January 2026
advising they had agreed the revised SoCG (not
agreed with the Council) via a CMDR**

From: [Lisa Richardson](#)
To: [Rachel Gibbs](#); [Amanda Parrott](#); [Robert Davy](#)
Cc: [Matthew Kay](#); [Michael Murrell](#); [Christine Lyons](#)
Subject: FW: SoCG The Castle Point Plan CPBC and Basildon
Date: 06 January 2026 16:26:40
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[Castle Point Plan - SoCG - CPBC and Basildon clean 22122025.docx](#)
[Castle Point Plan - SoCG - CPBC and Basildon Changes 22122025.docx](#)

Good Afternoon

Further to my previous email, the call in period for the Statement of Common Ground is now complete so that attached SOCG is our signed off response.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you

Kind Regards

Lisa

Lisa Richardson
Principal Planner, Strategy and Implementation

Basildon Borough Council



Enclosure 14: Email from the Council to BC dated 8 January 2026 regarding the revised SoCG (not agreed with the Council)

From: [Amanda Parrott](#)
To: [Lisa Richardson](#)
Cc: [Robert Davy](#); [Beth Jones](#); [Rachel Gibbs](#); [Ian Butt](#); [Angela Law](#); [Matthew Kay](#); [Michael Murrell](#); [Christine Lyons](#)
Subject: SoCG - Castle Point Plan and Basildon BC
Date: 08 January 2026 15:43:00
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[Re DtC Minutes 18.11.25.msg](#)
[SoCG The Castle Point Plan CPBC and Basildon.msg](#)
[Basildon Borough Council Response Letter to Castle Point Borough Council Regulation 19.pdf](#)
[Re SoCG The Castle Point Plan CPBC and Basildon.msg](#)
[RE SoCG The Castle Point Plan CPBC and Basildon.msg](#)
[Re SoCG The Castle Point Plan CPBC and Basildon.msg](#)
[Re SoCG The Castle Point Plan CPBC and Basildon.msg](#)
[SoCG with BBC - 8 jan 2025.docx](#)

Dear Lisa,

Thank you for your email of 22nd December 2025 and 6th January 2026 and your proposal for a new SoCG, which came as a surprise as the changes proposed have not been raised at any DtC meeting.

The SoCG was based on Basildon's representation made to the Castle Point Plan Regulation 19 Consultation. The SoCG was sent to you on 13th November 2025 and was discussed at a DtC meeting on 18th November 2025. The minutes of which were sent to you on 19th November 2025 and were agreed by you in your email on 24th November 2025. The minutes record that all paragraphs within the SoCG were agreed except changes to paragraphs 6.3, 10.3 and 10.4 proposed by Basildon BC. These amendments were accepted by CPBC and the final agreed SoCG was sent to you on 24th November 2025. Following, this we received the following emails:

25th November 2025 Email from Lisa Richardson "I'll confirm when it has been signed"
1st December 2025 Email CPBC requests signed agreed SoCG
4th December 2025: Email CPBC requests signed agreed SoCG
5th December 2025: Email CPBC requests signed agreed SoCG
8th December 2025: Email from Lisa Richardson "We are happy to sign this but we are just waiting confirmation from our Democratic Services team that there are no further governance requirements. I am hoping to have confirmation of this tomorrow (9/12)."
10th December: 2025: Email CPBC requests signed agreed SoCG
10th December 2025: Email from Lisa Richardson (Mathew Kay and Michael Murrell copied in) "The document has been agreed with Michael but I am just waiting for our Governance Team to agree it can be issued. I've chased them again for a response and I will send the document over to you as soon as it is agreed. "
10th December 2025: Email from Michael Murrell (Christian Lyons, Lisa Richardson) "I will follow up with the team and ensure the signed document is across with you today."
12th December 2025: Email: CPBC requests signed agreed SoCG
15th December 2025: Email CPBC requests signed agreed SoCG
17th December 2025: Telephone conversation with Lisa Richardson confirmed in email on 18th December 2025 to Mathew Kay and Lisa Richardson "Following my telephone call yesterday, I understand that the Castle Point and Basildon SoCG is to be signed by your

portfolio holder this week and this will be followed by a 5 working day scrutiny period.”

18th December 2025: CPBC requesting link to CMDR regarding the Statement of Common Ground

22nd December 2025: Basildon sends new revised SoCG

6th January 2025: Basildon declares that new unagreed SoCG signed

I enclose the relevant emails for your perusal.

The Duty to Cooperate Statement of Common Ground is a two-way document demonstrating not just how the Local authority delivering a local plan has cooperated but how the neighbouring authority has cooperated, and the document serves to support both authorities' local plan making. The Statement of Common Ground should be underpinned and supported by a written record of discussion and agreement, which the agreed SoCG sent on 24th November 2025 has, as shown above. Should we require to use this evidence during examination, could you please provide the link to the CMDR regarding the agreed 24th November SoCG, as we have been unable to locate it.

The revised SoCG sent by Basildon Council on 22nd December 2025 has not been discussed at any DtC meeting and has not been agreed by CPBC so it is unclear to what purpose the email on 6th January serves in stating that this is Basildon's final signed off response. We have reviewed the draft SoCG you sent on the 22 December 2025 and found many of the amendments created confusion and contradict what had previously been agreed. Considering the issues you have raised via the amendments set out in the 22 December 2025 version, we have worked through the SoCG again to make the position of both parties clear. A revised draft dated 8 January 2026 and reflecting the position of Castle Point Borough Council in respect of the amendments proposed by Basildon Borough Council on the 22 December 2025 is attached.

Castle Point Borough Council's is happy to discuss this matter via a meeting, but this must be by 16th January 2026, in order to meet our local plan timetable.

Kind regards,

Amanda Parrott

Assistant Director, Climate and Growth

Place and Communities

www.castlepoint.gov.uk

**Enclosure 15: Email from BC dated 22 January 2026
setting out further amendments to the SoCG**

From: [Matthew Kay](#)
To: [Amanda Parrott](#); [Lisa Richardson](#); [Stephanie Kober](#); [Nikitha VenuGopal](#); [Sophie Gould](#)
Cc: [Robert Davy](#); [Beth Jones](#); [Matthew Amner](#)
Subject: Re: Basildon and Castle Point DtC Meeting 27 January 2026
Date: 22 January 2026 17:35:08
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[Castle Point Plan - SoCG - CPBC and Basildon Changes 22122025 CLL - Copy.docx](#)

Dear Amanda,

Apologies for delay in responding. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

We can continue to provide officer support to minute, that is no problem. We have reviewed the SoCG and latest copy is attached. Please can we keep using tracked changes as we go on, we had to go over previous changes that had not been track changed, so it did delay us in reviewing this.

As you can imagine the attached will reflect a more firmed up corporate position. But look forwards to catching up next week.

In the meantime, one question we did have was that we were not clear if the Housing Capacity Research Paper referred to in paragraphs 8.3 and 9.5 is the Housing Market Absorption Rates Housing Delivery Technical Note published December 2025 at <https://www.castlepoint.gov.uk/documents/d/guest/market-absorption-rates-castle-point-housing-delivery-technical-note> or if this is a different document not yet seen by Basildon Council. We would be grateful if you could please clarify this?

Kind Regards,

Matthew

From: Amanda Parrott [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, January 22, 2026 3:49 PM
To: Sophie Gould [REDACTED]; Matthew Kay [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]; Lisa Richardson [REDACTED]
Stephanie Kober [REDACTED]; Nikitha VenuGopal [REDACTED]
Cc: Robert Davy [REDACTED]; Beth Jones [REDACTED]
Matthew Amner [REDACTED]
Subject: Basildon and Castle Point DtC Meeting 27 January 2026

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi all,

Secondly, I understand that you are under pressure to progress from Regulation 18 to Regulation 19 quickly and you will no doubt be buried in representations at this time.

Not wishing to add to your pressures, and hopefully with the aim of easing them, I have therefore proposed an agenda for next Tuesdays Duty to Cooperate meeting below – hopefully not too dissimilar to normal.

1. Basildon Local Plan & next steps, including discussion of consultation response from Castle Point
2. Castle Point Local Plan & next steps, including discussion of SoCG between Castle Point and Basildon
3. Implications of Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation
4. AOB & Date of Next Meeting

We are extremely grateful that Sophie has provided the notes for these meetings over the last couple of years, but if it would help, we are also happy to cover the notes if this would also aid you.

Kindest regards,

Amanda Parrott

Assistant Director, Climate and Growth
Place and Communities
www.castlepoint.gov.uk



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**Enclosure 16: Letter from the Council to BC dated
26 January 2026 regarding the SoCG**



Climate & Growth
Castle Point Borough Council,
Council Offices, Kiln Road,
Thundersley, Benfleet,
Essex, SS7 1TF
www.castlepoint.gov.uk

[REDACTED] Date: 26 January 2026

Dear Matthew,

Re: Statement of Common Ground regarding the Castle Point Plan

I write in response to your email of 22 January 2026.

During the meeting of 18 November 2025, at which Castle Point Borough Council (CPBC) were given to understand that agreement had been reached between the two authorities regarding the Statement of Common Ground (SoCG), we were not made aware that Basildon Council (BC) would seek political authorisation for a different version of that document. While we note the Cabinet Member Decision was taken on 24 December 2025, CPBC were not advised of this until after call-in expired on 7 January 2026.

As I previously advised in an email of 8 January 2026, CPBC and BC agreed a draft Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) back in November 2025, I include the email correspondence where different officers stated that this would be signed, which emails are also referenced in the chronology noted at the end of this letter.

It is unclear to us why BC failed to sign the earlier version in accordance with the agreement reached in November 2025, and why it is that BC is now adopting a different position. In this regard, regrettably, much of the draft of the SoCG now appears to have been rewritten on 13 January 2026. Further, this latest version was only issued on 22 January 2026. We would be grateful to understand how and why this changed stance has been adopted.

We note that your Cabinet Member Decision Record specifically refers to the version of the Statement of Common Ground you revised in December, which CPBC has not agreed. As we understand your Executive Director now wants to make further changes to the SoCG. We query whether or not you are currently authorised to enter into an alternative agreement, given the back of the Cabinet Member Decision Record. This will need urgent discussion at our next meeting.

Having regard to the various changes you have made (or are seeking to make) in your most recent draft of the SoCG, it is apparent that BC is seeking to make some additional representations beyond those included in Michael Murrell's letter dated 16 October 2025 setting out your representation to the Regulation 19 consultation. In this regard, we note that the covering email advised CPBC that we should treat the correspondence as final. We do not currently understand why or how it is that BC is now seeking to 'undo' the agreement which the authorities have carefully worked towards and agreed over the past several months. Typically representations on Local Plans should be supported by evidence, and the onus is on representors to set out clearly how you think a Plan should be

modified. BC did not suggest any modifications to the Regulation 19 Castle Point Plan in its consultation response, albeit that your position in respect of Standard Method is noted.

Since the 2024 NPPF was published in draft form (July 2024), CPBC has advised that the Castle Point Plan would identify a constrained housing target. CPBC know that this has long been understood by BC; indeed both yourself and the policy planner listed on the Cabinet Member Decision Record for BC's response to CPBC's Regulation 19 consultation were present at the Duty to Cooperate meeting on 30 July 2024, where housing options were discussed, and your principal planner attended a meeting on 30 October 2024 where it was confirmed that the Standard Method could not be met.

It is for the Inspector to decide at Examination whether or not they accept CPBC's approach to housing policy within the Plan. CPBC know there are no automatic guarantees of the Plan being found sound, but the Council's position is drawn from the conclusions grounded in the evidence base.

BC's Regulation 19 representations assert that the Castle Point Plan is not compliant with relevant legislation (paragraph 1.3). However your text then refers to the NPPF and Standard Method which are expressions of planning policy, not statute. This is relevant, because:

- a. Footnote 7 and the PPG clarify that a constrained target is, in fact, acceptable under planning policy, which your Executive Director has now proposed adding into the Statement of Common Ground. This point was also removed by yourselves in an earlier draft.
- b. There are two strands to the Council's approach of setting a constrained housing target: 1) the fact that evidence shows the need is not as high as the unconstrained Standard Method outturn would require, and 2) the various constraints faced by the borough. We note your latest comments on the SoCG and potential unmet need, but it is for the Inspector to decide on the robustness of the arguments at Examination.
- c. Despite not meeting Standard Method, evidence shows that Castle Point's housing need would be met through the level of provision identified in the Plan. It would not therefore place any pressure on neighbouring boroughs. Again, the merits of this argument are for the Inspector to consider at the Examination hearings.
- d. Under Soundness Test A, NPPF Paragraph 36 clarifies that unmet need from other areas should only be accommodated where it is practical to do so. Very clearly if Castle Point cannot meet its own needs in full, it is unrealistic to expect need from elsewhere to be accommodated in Castle Point.

We will discuss these matters further at the scheduled Duty to Cooperate meeting on 27 January 2026. We look forward to resolving the outstanding points on the SoCG with you, and thereafter we will update PINS regarding progress when we submit the Plan for examination.

Yours sincerely,



Amanda Parrott
Assistant Director, Climate and Growth

Chronology of activity regarding the Statement of Common Ground

- Castle Point Borough Council (CPBC) chased Basildon Council (BC) for its representations on the Castle Point Plan. A holding response was received on 28 September 2025.
- The final response from BC to the Castle Point Plan was chased several times throughout October 2025.
- BC's representations on the Castle Point Plan Regulation 19 Consultation were received via email on the 28 October 2025, albeit that the letter was dated 16 October 2025.

The draft SoCG was prepared based on BC's representation to the Castle Point Plan Regulation 19 Consultation.

- The draft SoCG was sent to BC on 13 November 2025 and was discussed at a DtC meeting on 18 November 2025. The minutes were sent on 19 November 2025 and were agreed by BC in your email on 24 November 2025. The minutes record that all paragraphs within the SoCG were agreed except changes to paragraphs 6.3, 10.3 and 10.4 proposed by BC. These amendments were accepted by CPBC and the final agreed SoCG was sent to BC on 24 November 2025.

Following this, the following emails were sent in November and December 2025 with regard to signing of the SoCG. A summary of the key points appear below:

- 25 November 2025 Email from Lisa Richardson "I'll confirm when it has been signed".
- 1 December 2025 Email CPBC requests signed agreed SoCG.
- 4 December 2025: Email CPBC requests signed agreed SoCG.
- 5 December 2025: Email CPBC requests signed agreed SoCG.
- 8 December 2025: Email from Lisa Richardson "We are happy to sign this but we are just waiting confirmation from our Democratic Services team that there are no further governance requirements. I am hoping to have confirmation of this tomorrow (9/12).
- 10 December: 2025: Email CPBC requests signed agreed SoCG.
- 10 December 2025: Email from Lisa Richardson (Mathew Kay and Michael Murrell copied in) "The document has been agreed with Michael but I am just waiting for our Governance Team to agree it can be issued. I've chased them again for a response and I will send the document over to you as soon as it is agreed."
- 10 December 2025: Email from Michael Murrell (Christine Lyons, Lisa Richardson)"I will follow up with the team and ensure the signed document is across with you today."
- 12 December 2025: Email: CPBC requests signed agreed SoCG.
- 15 December 2025: Email CPBC requests signed agreed SoCG.
- 17 December 2025: Telephone conversation with Lisa Richardson confirmed in email on 18 December 2025 to Matthew Kay and Lisa Richardson "Following my telephone call

yesterday, I understand that the Castle Point and Basildon SoCG is to be signed by your portfolio holder this week and this will be followed by a 5 working day scrutiny period."

- 18 December 2025: CPBC requesting link to CMDR regarding the Statement of Common Ground.
- 22 December 2025: BC sends a revised SoCG which differed significantly from that agreed in November 2025.
- 24 December 2025: BC enter a Cabinet Member Decision Record on its ModGov system in respect of the SoCG copy above (22 December) to seek authorisation to enter into an SoCG.
- 6 January 2026: BC advised the revised SoCG had been signed by their portfolio holder.
- 8 January 2026: Email from CPBC issued to Lisa Richardson and Matthew Kay enclosing full correspondence in respect of the above matter, and explaining that the revised SoCG was not agreed by CPBC. CPBC sought a meeting to discuss the matter.
- 20 January 2026: As no response was received to the email of 8 January 2026, CPBC sent a follow on email advising this matter could be discussed at the DtC meeting on 27 January 2026.
- 22 January 2026: Email from Matthew Kay acknowledging the meeting on 27 January would proceed, and which contained a further revised version of the SoCG incorporating many new points inserted by the Executive Director (with text dated 13 January 2026).