

I speak on my own behalf as a Castle Point Councillor.

I am sure that at some point during this Inquiry, mention will be made of the fact that Castle Point's Local Plan is out of date, and that since 1998 there have been a number of failed attempts to get a new plan in place. This is undeniable, but I wish to put on record that we have a new Administration now here in Castle Point.

Over the past two years we have been making excellent progress with the Castle Point Plan (on a cross-party basis). The Council is on schedule to submit a plan for examination, well ahead of the Secretary of State's deadline of December 2026.

We have completed Regulation 18 (the Issues and Options public consultation stage), where the soon to be published results will clearly show that our residents wish us to protect as much of our Borough's Green Belt as possible.

This Administration is both fully committed and confident of delivering the Castle Point Plan on time; a resident-led Plan that will deliver the right homes in the right locations.

Not only is there the political will here to deliver the Castle Point Plan but, more importantly, we have a clear democratic mandate to do so.