



Planning Inspectorate

Castle Point Plan

Initial Matters Issues and Questions

Matter 1

Housing requirement and provision

As set out in our initial note, we have some significant concerns about the soundness of the Castle Point Plan; in particular whether or not more housing sites could appropriately be allocated in order to meet all or more of the area's objectively assessed housing need. We wish to explore this key concern at initial hearing sessions. We will not be exploring any other matters at this stage, including the case for or against any sites which have been allocated in the submitted plan. Should the examination continue following the initial hearing sessions these others matters will be fully considered then.

The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) expects the Council to establish a housing requirement figure for Castle Point which shows the extent to which the identified housing need, calculated using the standard method, can be met over the plan period.

For the plan period proposed, housing need calculated using the standard method is 11,662 dwellings. The Plan proposes a housing requirement of some 6,196 dwellings, which would meet about 52% of that need.

Questions

1 Is the plan's housing requirement figure of 6,196 over the plan period, set out in Strategic Policy SP3, positively prepared, justified and consistent with national policy and in particular do any adverse impacts of providing for all or more of the area's objectively assessed housing needs (11,662 dwellings over the plan period calculated using the Standard Method) significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole?

- a) Do the constraints identified by the Council justify not allocating each of the sites for housing development recommended for further consideration by the DCA Green Belt Study, including sites which already have planning permission?

- b) Is there clear evidence that altering Green Belt boundaries to meet all or more of the area's objectively assessed housing need would fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt, when considered across the area of the Plan?

Mike Worden and Catherine Carpenter

INSPECTORS

17 June 2026