

Clear Evidence & Facts

Castle Point, like the country at large, needs sustainable new homes. However, we should protect as much of our valuable Green Belt as possible. So, in order to keep local control of planning, and keep our most valuable Green Belt safe, the Council must strive to meet our objectively assessed housing need by releasing Grey Belt.

Compared to other Boroughs, Castle Point has extensive Green Belt (53-55.9%) and more 'low quality' Green Belt, that is not performing the Green Belt functions. Clearly, in releasing Grey Belt for housing, Castle Point has no greater difficulty, nor has greater adverse exceptional circumstances, than other Boroughs which have released Grey Belt.

Castle Point has the **lowest** new homes building rate in England*, failing those who desperately need housing, though some who already have a nice house, may disagree.

The Council's own consistent and 'Rigorous Evidence Base': There is clear evidence that using Castle Point's Grey Belt to help meet its objectively assessed housing need would **not** fundamentally undermine the purposes of the remaining Green Belt.

For example, the Council has consistently claimed that its own evidence base, for all Draft Plans from the 1998 Plan up to and including the '**Sound**' 2023 Plan, was '**rigorous**', (viz. extremely thorough, careful, accurate and fair); as the Inspectorate formally found in examining the 2023 Plan.

Circumstances have changed since 1998, with year to year:

- Egregious failure of local housing delivery;
- Twelve million+ UK population growth**;
- Failure to substantially reduce the local housing waiting list;

Acting in concert, these changes have dramatically increased the need for local housing.

All Draft Plans since the currently adopted 1998 Plan have allocated housing to the GB6 Green Belt site, (now identified as Grey Belt, which I will use throughout as an example). Clearly, the Council consistently argued that these GB sites **do not serve the Green Belt functions** and that removing them would **not undermine** the remaining Green Belt, and the Inspectorate reinforced this by finding the 2023 Plan to be sound..

This is irrefutable evidence. Either the Council, and its various advisors, were serially disingenuous since 1998, or they are now incorrect in claiming they are unable to release Grey Belt sites to meet our undeniable housing need.

If required, I can produce many Council documents allocating GB6 (and other GB sites) for housing, clearly demonstrating it is correct to do so. For example, the Council, in Pre-Application Written Response, PE/0004/2012, recommended approval for 178 dwellings on the 22 acres King John's Wood (KJW) site in GB6. However, given recent Framework changes, GB6 could now deliver up to 280 dwellings*** of a wide mix, with substantial connectivity, environmental, economic and social benefits.

Not Positively Prepared: The community-spirited GB6 KJW Consortium Landowners have been, and remain, ready and keen to work positively with the Council to supply the

highly sustainable and immediately deliverable housing land that the Housing Minister said in his letter of 30th June 2025: '**Castle Point so desperately needs**'.

However, the Council has refused to 'engage positively' with GB6 landowners to secure suitable housing land supply. The Council has, three times, refused to meet the representative of GB6 KJW landowners. (For example, see email below.)

From: <CPPlan@castlepoint.gov.uk> Sent: 27 November 2025 14:38

Subject: RE: For Matthew Amner, Planning Officer IC Local Plan

'Dear Dr Spink, Apologies for the delayed response. The GB6 site is not allocated in the draft plan and therefore does not currently require a meeting to discuss. Thank-you. Planning Policy Team Castle Point'

Examination Outcome: The best outcome would be to make changes, (main modifications 'MMs'), to include the 'Plan B' Grey Belt sites adding ≈4000 dwellings and probably more^{***}. But this work should be very strictly time limited, given the Council's propensity to delay.

This would retain local control over planning, keep the vast majority, and most valuable, Green Belt safe, and deliver much needed houses and community benefits such as new public open space.

I respectfully stress that keeping local control of planning is important for local democracy, and for both providing housing and protecting our genuine Green Belt.

NOTES

* In November 2025 The Ministry of Housing stated: '*at 0.5 per 1000 existing homes, Castle Point has the lowest new homes building rate in England*'.

** The UK population grew from 58.5 million in 1998 to roughly 70.2 million 2024.

*** The Council's Housing Capacity Topic Paper (August 2025) **specifically identifies GB6** to be used to help achieve it's housing target, stating:

*'The increased Housing Target, Plan B, aims for 9998 homes, significantly more than the 6196 proposed in emerging Plan, using land previously considered Green Belt **but now Grey Belt.**'*
(Thus the Council acknowledge that those identified sites are, in fact, Grey Belt)

Plan B assumes only 159 dwellings for GB6 yet the Council previously recommended 178 on only 22 acres, at 8DPA, of the GB6 30 acres; representing, proportionally, 243 dwellings for GB6. In fact the true capacity of GB6 is nearer 280 (≈9DPA). This uplift may also apply to other Grey Belt sites, yielding more than the estimated 4000 additional dwellings.

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