



Castle Point
Statement of Community Involvement
(SCI)
2026

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Draft	V2.2	Stephen Garner – Assistant Director for Development Services Amanda Parrott – Assistant Director for Climate and Growth Genny Middlemast – Principal Planning Policy Officer	May 2026	Incorporating suggestions and amendments
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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out how the community and other stakeholders will be engaged and consulted on local planning policy documents and planning applications.

2. General Principles of Planning Consultations

- 2.1. The Council will apply the following general principles to our planning consultations and engagement activities. Where consultations and engagement activities are being undertaken by others, we will expect them to apply these too.
- Involvement will be open to all regardless of all age, disability, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexuality or gender.
 - The views of interested and affected parties will be sought, as early as possible.
 - We will choose engagement and consultation methods which ensure safe but effective engagement, balanced against the availability of resources, costs and time constraints. There are some things we are required to do by law which reduce our discretion in this regard.
 - Consultation publications will be as clear and concise as possible, avoiding unnecessary jargon, without understating the complexities of any issue.
 - We will inform those who take part in engagement activities or respond to a consultation of the next stages in the process, where details have been provided.
 - We will continue to co-operate with neighbouring boroughs and public bodies to ensure that strategic matters are addressed.

3. Planning Policy Consultation Database

- 3.1. Over time, the Council has built up an extensive database of organisations and individuals who wish to be involved in consultations on planning policy matters.
- 3.2. Any individual or organisations wishing to be included may request be added to the database at any time. Please contact: planningpolicy@castlepoint.gov.uk
- 3.3. This database will be periodically reviewed to ensure it remains up to date and complies with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). In between these reviews, if you wish to be removed from this database you can submit a request at any time.
- 3.4. All personal data will be processed in accordance with GDPR and Castle Point Borough Councils Privacy Notice.
- 3.5. More details on Castle Point Borough Councils Privacy Notice can be found at <https://www.castlepoint.gov.uk/privacy-notices>

4. Development Plan Documents (DPDs)

- 4.1. Development Plan Documents (DPDs) are locally produced documents containing policies to manage and guide development. The Castle Point Plan is a DPD. DPDs must be supported by evidence, generally accord with national planning policies, and must be subject to an ongoing process of sustainability appraisal, to ensure that the policies are soundly based on economic, social and environment grounds.
- 4.2. Consultation is required at various stages as part of the preparation and publication of a DPD in order to ensure that all the relevant and important issues in the local area are identified and planned for appropriately. The requirements for such consultation are set out in legislation and will be applied as a minimum within Castle Point when DPDs are prepared.
- 4.3. The following approach applies to consultation and engagement on Development Plan Documents.

4.4. Who will be consulted?

- In accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Regulation 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 consultation of statutory organisations including nearby councils, infrastructure providers and government bodies as legally required, or otherwise appropriate.
- Based on the subject of the document will we also consult the following groups as appropriate:
 - Groups representing a place, communities or other special interests;
 - Local businesses, voluntary and other organisations;
 - The general public;
 - Planning and development industry stakeholders;
 - Others who have expressed an interest in the issue or matter.

4.5. When will consultation occur?

- Targeted consultation and engagement with organisations and key stakeholders throughout preparation of any DPD, in addition to legal requirements.
- Consultation periods will be for a minimum of 6 weeks
- We will consider the need to prepare documents for additional engagement and consultation stages as appropriate, based on the topic and based on the need for further feedback through consultation. Any additional consultations will last for a minimum of 6 weeks.
- We will consider the need for targeted engagement with organisations, key stakeholders and other groups as appropriate throughout the preparation of the plan outside any formal consultations to assist in developing the plan.
- Once the Council feels that there has been an appropriate level of community involvement, the DPD will be finalised for publication and submitted to the Government for independent examination.

4.6. How will we consult?

- We will directly contact appropriate organisations and individuals we have a statutory duty to contact.

- We will directly contact those organisations and individuals on our planning policy database, as appropriate. Where an email address has been provided this will be by email.
- We will publicise consultations by a combination of methods, as appropriate such as; the Council's website, press release, announcements on social media and the use of community notice boards. Other options may also be explored as appropriate, including opportunities to work with partner organisations.
- Consultation materials will be made available to view and download from the Council's website. Stakeholders are strongly encouraged to access materials in this way.
- Consultation materials will also be available to view at the Council Offices, Waterside Leisure Centre, Runnymede Leisure Centre¹ and the Borough's public libraries during normal offices hours.
- Anyone wishing to respond to a consultation is encouraged to do so online via our consultation portal, as this is the quickest and most effective method of responding. Paper copy response forms will also be made available for collection at the Council Offices, Waterside Leisure Centre and the Borough's public libraries during normal offices hours. These can be returned to their collection point or by post to the Council Offices. When addressing any post, it should be marked clearly for Planning Policy.
- The Council will also accept others forms of response such as an email or letter. When making a response by email or letter, it should be marked clearly so that it can be assigned to the consultation. All responses, including those sent by email or post must be received by the consultation deadline to be taken into account.

4.7. How will consultation responses be dealt with?

- All responses will be recorded in a database and we will publish them or a summary as soon as it is feasible to do so. When publishing comments, we will normally publish the person's name. We may occasionally redact elements of a comment where it provides too much information about a person's identity and would breach data protection rules. We may also redact those parts of a comment which contain discriminatory or hateful content in order to ensure we do not breach rules in the Equality Act.
- We will explain how consultation responses have been taken into account in the preparation of the plan, and in any decisions taken, as required by legislation. There are some points within the process of preparing a plan where this is not required, and any comments received are dealt with through the examination process instead. We will make it clear in consultation materials where this is the case.

¹ The area before the entrance barriers is relatively small and narrow and it is not possible to put a table with documents in that area without presenting a potential obstacle in the event of a need to safely evacuate the building. Therefore consultation documents will be placed on a table beyond the barriers, but this would only be accessible to admitted site users, and not the wider public.

5. Non Statutory Material Planning Considerations

- 5.1. The National Planning Policy Framework published in December 2024 (NPPF) introduced transitional arrangements at Annex 1 to support the shift to the new plan-making system established by the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 (LURA) which replaces the plan making provisions in Part 2 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (PCP).
- 5.2. Schedule 7 Section 15CC of the LURA 2023 introduces a new category of “supplementary plans” which are statutory and must follow a new, more formal process for adoption which includes going through independent examination, similar to a DPD and therefore carries the same weight when used to make decisions.
- 5.3. These recent legislative reforms removed the ability for local authorities to adopt new Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and instead introduced supplementary plans.
- 5.4. The transitional provisions, set out in the LURA (Commencement No.11 and Saving and Transitional Provisions) Regulations 2026 enables authorities to continue adopting SPDs until 30th June 2026. After this date they will cease to be available as a plan making tool.
- 5.5. While supplementary plans will provide a more formal and scrutinised route for detailed policy, Local Authorities may still prepare non-statutory material planning considerations, which although are not part of the development plan, can be given weight as a material planning consideration. Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (TCPA 1990) requires planning authorities to have regard to the development plan and any other material planning considerations when determining applications.
- 5.6. Non statutory material planning considerations can be approved to provide guidance and more detailed advice on matters set out in a Development Plan Document. These documents will be prepared using an appropriate evidence base, and should conform with national policy, and the policy or policies within the Development Plan Document they are intended to support.
- 5.7. Unlike a Development Plan Document or the supplementary plan documents, these non statutory planning considerations are not independently examined by a Planning Inspector and are approved for use at a local level by the Council.
- 5.8. In compliance with the Council’s common law duty to act fairly, transparently and with proper regard to relevant considerations when making decisions that will influence planning outcomes, the council will undertake consultation on these documents.
- 5.9. Government guidance on planning practice emphasises the importance of efficient, inclusive and proportionate consultation in planning matters, even where consultation is not mandated, as part of good practice and sound decision making.
- 5.10. Case law on material considerations confirms that the weight that a document may lawfully carry depends partly on the process used to prepare it. *Newbury District*

Council v Secretary of State for the Environment (1981) AC 578 establishes that a factor is material if it serves a planning purpose and is fairly and reasonably related to the development.

- 5.11. Consultation therefore strengthens the procedural legitimacy of the approval of these documents and supports its defensible use as a material planning consideration, reducing the risk of challenge.
- 5.12. Therefore, the Council will carry out at least one stage of consultation in the preparation of a non-statutory material planning consideration and must ensure that other legal requirements related to environmental assessments are met.
- 5.13. The same general methods of consultation, as described for DPDs above will be used for these documents. However, there are variations in 'when consultation occurs', as set out below:

5.14. When will consultation occur?

- We will consider the need for targeted engagement with the community, organisations and key stakeholders in developing the document.
- We will consult on a draft version of the document for a minimum of 4 weeks.
- After considering the responses to the draft, we will consider the need for further engagement or consultation. The Council will decide if the engagement or consultation needs to be targeted or more extensive based on the issues arising.
- Once we consider that there has been an appropriate level of community involvement and made any appropriate amendments, the Council will approve the use of the document as a non-statutory material planning consideration.

6. Master Plans, Development Briefs and Design Codes

- 6.1. These documents provide detail at a site or area level about what types of development will occur and some details about what it should look like. Master plans and development briefs will also detail how the development will provide or relate to infrastructure, and how the development will be connected into the wider area.
- 6.2. Master Plans, Development Briefs and Design Codes are used to ensure that allocations and other development arising from Development Plan Documents such as the Local Plan deliver on the policy requirements and objectives for the area.
- 6.3. Due to their level of detail, and because they normally include more graphics than other planning policy documents, consultation on master plans, development briefs and design codes are generally something that communities can engage in with greater ease.
- 6.4. Master Plans, Development Briefs and Design Codes are not independently examined by a Planning Inspector and are adopted for use at a local level by the Council. However, as these plans affect the use of land legal requirements related to environmental assessment must be met. Additionally, if the Council wants to afford a master plan, development brief or design code weight in the decisions it takes, it should also meet the legislative requirements for consultation set out above for non-

statutory material planning considerations. Having met those requirements, the Council could choose to approve a master plan, development brief or design code for use as a non-statutory material planning consideration.

- 6.5. Given the high potential for communities to engage with master planning and the preparation of development briefs and design codes, the same general methods of consultation, as described for DPDs will apply. There will however be variation in when engagement and consultation occurs for these documents, as set out below:

6.6. When will consultation occur for a Master Plan, Development Brief or Design Code?

- We will consider the need for targeted engagement with the community, organisations and key stakeholders in developing each document.
- We will consult on a draft version of the document for a minimum of 4 weeks.
- After considering the responses to the draft, we will consider the need for further engagement or consultation. The Council will decide if the engagement or consultation needs to be targeted or more extensive based on the issues arising.
- Once we consider that there has been an appropriate level of community involvement and made any appropriate amendments, we will approve the document for use as a non-statutory material planning consideration.

7. Neighbourhood Plans and Development Orders

- 7.1. Neighbourhood Plans and Neighbourhood Development Orders are taken forward by qualifying bodies and communities themselves. They are not prepared by the Council; therefore, this SCI does not prescribe what methods of community engagement they must follow. It will be for the qualifying bodies and communities to decide an appropriate level of community engagement in relation to the size and complexity of the Plan. Nevertheless, the Council will expect this to meet the requirements set out in appropriate legislation and to follow wherever possible the general principles and techniques set out in this SCI.
- 7.2. The Council will assist/ advise, as appropriate, on the Neighbourhood Plan or Neighbourhood Development Order process in line with relevant Regulations.

8. Community Infrastructure Levy

- 8.1. The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a charge which allows the Council to raise funds for infrastructure to support new development. CIL rates are set out in a Charging Schedule. Castle Point Borough Council adopted its CIL Charging Schedule on 1st May 2023 and it continues to operate in accordance with the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended). The Council will ensure that consultation on CIL matters such as amendments to the adopted charging schedule will achieve at least the minimum requirements set out in legislation. On this basis
- Consultation will be for a minimum of 4 weeks.

- We will consult statutory bodies identified in legislation, stakeholders, interested bodies and where appropriate, the wider community.
- We will publish comments received or a summary as soon as it is feasible.
- Where necessary, an independent inspector will examine the Charging Schedule, having considered the representations made prior to making recommendations for the Council to consider in adopting the charging schedule.

9. Planning Applications

- 9.1. We are keen to encourage developers to discuss their proposals with planning officers before submitting an application. This can confirm whether the principle of development is acceptable and clarify the format, type and level of detail required to enable us to determine an application. Pre-application advice is currently provided on request and its procedure and associated cost is available on our planning website.
- 9.2. Where an applicant has not taken pre-application advice, the Council will where appropriate seek to identify areas of concern with a proposal and offer solutions or the opportunity to amend a scheme to overcome those concerns. However, if those concerns are so fundamental that the scheme in its entirety is unacceptable, then the applicant's agent will be notified of this and the planning application in its submitted form.
- 9.3. On receipt of a planning application the Council will, as a minimum, carry out consultation in accordance with the requirements of the relevant legislation² and take account of any relevant consultation responses received during the consultation period. This may involve displaying a site notice or sending notifications to affected neighbours by letter or email or placing an advertisement in the local press.
- 9.4. Previous consultation methods for planning applications typically only consulted neighbouring properties immediately adjoining the site, which consists of those either side, behind and opposite. Significant changes to this approach are proposed following the adoption of this Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). The methods of consultation for different scales of development are outlined below.

Consultation Letter	• Used for most planning application types and will usually only be sent to neighbouring properties immediately adjoining the site, which consists of those either side, behind and opposite. • Entire roads, postcodes or areas will not be notified of a planning application unless they fall within specific categories. • If a development scheme comprises 50-249 dwellings or 2,500-4,999m² commercial floor space,
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² As may be contained within [The Town and Country Planning \(Development Management Procedure\) \(England\) Order 2015](#), [The Town and Country Planning \(General Permitted Development\) \(England\) Order 2015](#) or any other such Direction as may be applicable

	properties within 200m of the site boundary will be consulted³. • If a development scheme comprises 250+ dwellings or 5,000m²+ commercial floor space, properties within 400m of the site boundary will be consulted².
Site Notice	• Used for when adjoining land ownership is unknown and there is no obvious postal address for the land. • Used for wider publicity of major planning applications. • Used for some applications for Certificates of Lawfulness for existing uses, where the council considers that neighbours or members of the public may have evidence that supports or counters the applicant's claim of lawfulness.
Press Notice	• Used for major development schemes which depart from the adopted Development Plan. • Used for developments which are carried out within, or may impact the setting of, a listed building or conservation area.
Social Media Communications	• Used for wider publicity of major planning applications.

9.5. When letters are sent to neighbouring properties, these will be sent in a plain envelope and be addressed to the occupier. This is because the Local Planning Authority do not hold a database of who lives at or owns each property within the borough. Within the consultation letter, the occupier will be instructed to pass the consultation letter onto the property owner if that is not themselves.

9.6. The Council will not search for property owners details utilising Land Registry details in addition to letters notifying the occupiers due both to the prohibitive expense and because the sending of letters, and where required site notices and press notices satisfies the notification requirements within the legislation.

9.7. Public consultations normally last for 21 days during which time any representations to an application should be made to the Council. Where a re-consultation takes place, this time period for responding is usually reduced to 14 days. Any correspondence accompanying a public consultation will specify the duration of that consultation.

³ Consultations for major development within a buffer zone will take place for the first consultation only. Subsequent consultations, re-consultations or notifications on the same application will only be to those who have engaged and provided comments on an application, with the exception of appeal notifications, whereby the Council will follow the Planning Inspectorates guidance. The buffer will not extend outside the borough boundary. If a development is split over multiple applications but the sites are adjoining and submitted at the same time, the total number of dwellings and/or commercial floorspace will be added together to determine the correct buffer zone for consultation.

- 9.8. Where a minor amendment is received which would not materially change the character of a development or would result in the development becoming smaller, this may not result in a re-consultation taking place.
- 9.9. To ensure early public involvement on major development proposals or locally sensitive schemes the applicant will be encouraged to carry out public consultations before making a planning application. Before making a major planning application (10+ dwellings or 0.5+ ha of residential development or 1000+ square metres of building space or 1.0+ ha of development land), prospective applicants should:
- Talk to the Council planning officers about their application through making use of the Council's pre-application advice service;
 - Talk directly with relevant statutory consultees to minimise technical objections to their application. Some of the statutory consultees operate their own pre-application advice service;
 - Consult the local community on overall and specific aspects of the proposal. It is advised that the Council and local ward Members are notified of when such consultation is occurring and prior to this occurring;
 - Consider the consultation responses received and take them into account before making their planning application.
- 9.10. Before making other types of planning application, prospective applicants should also consult both the Council planning officers and people likely to be affected and consider their views before finalising the proposal. The latter may be as simple as talking over plans with a neighbour or making use of the Council's pre-application advice service.
- 9.11. Public or neighbour consultations undertaken by an applicant are done so on their own behest. Whilst the Council will encourage such public consultations, it cannot require applicants to undertake consultations, seek pre-application advice or influence what an applicant may or may not include as part of their consultation as it is entirely independent from the Council.
- 9.12. Where applicable planning applications should be accompanied by a consultation statement explaining what consultation has been carried out by the applicant, including technical and public involvement and how it has influenced the planning application proposals. The Council will consider any submitted consultation statement by applicants in addition to any comments received on the planning application.
- 9.13. In addition to neighbour consultation letters, as well as site and press notices as applicable, the Council will publicise a weekly list of planning applications which are available to view on our website. For Major Planning Applications, the Council will also publish a social media post or press release setting out the details of the application, the dates of the consultation and how comments on the application can be made.
- 9.14. Planning applications are public documents and can be viewed on the Council's website via Public Access our internet service that allows you to view and comment on planning applications. To view documents online please visit <https://publicaccess.castlepoint.gov.uk>.

- 9.15. The Council will consider the submitted consultation statement in addition to any other comments received on the planning application.
- 9.16. The Council will not publish public copies of public consultation responses on our website in order to ensure that no personal details of a public commenter can be identified by other persons.
- 9.17. Planning applications can also be viewed in person at the Council Offices. You must contact the Council before visiting to view planning applications documents. An appointment will be required for staff to show you the proposed plans on a computer. During such meetings, staff will not discuss the merits of the scheme and will only be able to show the proposed plans and answer basic questions about what is proposed.
- 9.18. The Council will by arrangement allow applicants and objectors to make a short statement on planning applications which are considered by the Development Management Committee. One public speaker in objection and one public speaker in support of a proposal are allowed to speak for each application presented to the Committee. A guide to how a planning application is decided⁴ and Development Management Committee Handbook⁵ is available on the Council's website.
- 9.19. The Council will publish the decisions on all planning applications on its website which will, where required, include the reasons for the decision. Please refer to the relevant planning pages on the Council's website:
<https://publicaccess.castlepoint.gov.uk>
- 9.20. Planning legislation inevitably is amended and updated. The current relevant Planning Acts and Regulations can be found at the official home of UK legislation:
www.legislation.gov.uk

We Will:

- Publish details of all planning applications on our planning portal Public Access, reached via our website
- We will notify adjoining neighbours with details of the application, where you can view it, and the date you should make your comments by
- Where a repeat application is submitted on the same site and is substantially similar, we will consult members of the public who commented on the previous scheme under the following circumstances:
 - within two years of a decision by the Local Planning Authority on a previous scheme; or
 - within two years of an appeal decision or decision by the Secretary of State.
- Consider any comments received alongside the application details and summarise these in
- Follow any other legislation currently in force.

You Can:

⁴ [How a planning application is decided](#)

⁵ [Development Management Committee Handbook 2025](#)

- View documents and sign up to be notified about planning applications on the self-service system on Public Access, where you can also:
 - Track applications
 - Search a weekly list, or by an address, or by a reference number
 - Choose which applications you want to be notified about
 - View supporting plans and documents
 - See other related plans such as previous applications and property history
 - Submit comments electronically
 - Read the officer's report and decision notice
 - See if any planning appeals have been made and read decisions on them
 - If you are using a digital device you can make comments via our online form.

You Should:

- Make sure you send us your comments by the closing date
- Provide your name and address – otherwise we cannot consider your comments
- Not make inappropriate comments including any that are racist, inflammatory or derogatory
- Limit your comments to material planning matters. These include:
 - Previous planning decisions
 - Traffic generation
 - Overlooking & loss of privacy
 - Layout/density of the building proposed
 - Loss of daylight or sunlight
 - Design and appearance of the proposal
 - Potential for additional noise and disturbance.
- Planning matters do not include:
 - Strength/volume of opposition
 - Loss of property value
 - Loss of a view
 - Disputes over access rights/ownership
 - Competition
 - Restrictive covenants
 - Political considerations
 - Who the applicant is

10. Lawful Development and Prior Approval Applications

10.1. Not all development proposals require a planning application. The General Permitted Development Order enables some development to occur without the need for a planning application. However, the Council receives the following in relation to this type of development:

- Applications seeking a certificate to confirm a proposal is lawful – this confirms that what is proposed does not need planning consent; and Prior approval applications – this application type seeks confirmation that additional rights within the General Permitted Development Order can be applied to a development, i.e larger residential extensions, additional floors on buildings, and changes of use.

10.2. Applications for a certificate to confirm a proposal is lawful is not the subject of consultation, as the issuing of a certificate simply confirms that a development does not need consent in law.

10.3. Some prior approval applications are the subject of consultation, with the specific requirements set out in the General Permitted Development Order. The Council will follow those requirements for these applications. For larger extensions to residential properties this would include writing to adjoining neighbours as an example. However, for a rear extension, it would not include writing to neighbours who are opposite a property, as they would not be affected by a rear extension.

10.4. In some instances, the Council will also receive applications for a certificate of lawfulness for an existing use or development. As this existing use or development may or may not have required planning consent, the Council will consult with adjoining neighbours prior to making a decision.

11. Enforcement

11.1. When things don't go to plan, the enforcement team can investigate alleged breaches of planning control and take steps to resolve identified breaches.

11.2. Planning officers investigate breaches of planning control which can be reported via the Council's website⁶ in accordance with the adopted Enforcement Policy⁷. Contact/updates related to planning enforcement matters will be addressed in line with the adopted Enforcement Policy.

12. Independent Planning Advice

12.1. Independent advice on planning is available from the Planning Aid website (<http://www.rtpi.org.uk/planning-aid/>). Planning Aid provides free, independent and professional town planning advice and support to communities and individuals who cannot afford to pay planning consultant fees. It complements the work of local planning authorities but is wholly independent of them. Planning Aid can assist people with their own planning applications or can help them to comment on planning applications or planning policy consultation documents.

If you have a query regarding the information set out in this Statement of Community Involvement or a specific question relating to a specific consultation or other planning policy matters, please contact us:

For Planning Policy matters

i.e. Local Plan, Policy Documents,
Supplementary Policy Documents etc.

Email: PlanningPolicy@castlepoint.gov.uk

Post: Planning Policy, Climate & Growth,
Place & Communities, Castle Point
Borough Council Offices, Kiln Road,
Thundersley, Benfleet, Essex, SS7 1TF

⁶ [Enforcement Complaint](#)

⁷ [Development Management Enforcement Policy 2026](#)

For Planning matters

i.e. Planning Applications, Decisions etc.

Email: Planning@castlepoint.gov.uk

Post: Planning, Development Services,
Place & Communities, Castle Point
Borough Council Offices, Kiln Road,
Thundersley, Benfleet, Essex, SS7 1TF