

Castle Point Borough Council - Statement as to Process – 9 September 2026

At the end of 2022, the Council began preparing a plan tailored to the needs of Castle Point.

The plan was developed progressively and transparently, with evidence commissioned in a logical sequence while also responding to changes in national policy.

Early work focused on understanding housing need, assessing site suitability through the Place-maker tool, and identifying potential supply through a call for sites.

Given their longer lead-in times, the Council also commissioned early evidence on open space, local wildlife sites and flood risk.

Further work established the transport and infrastructure baselines.

Throughout the process, the evidence was presented to the Castle Point Board, and discussions were held with Board Members regarding how that evidence would influence the plan.

The evidence informed the 2024 Regulation 18 Issues and Options consultation, which sought views on the scale of growth and a range of spatial approaches, including urban intensification, regeneration, Green Belt release and larger-scale development. Promoted Green Belt sites were included for comment, and a further call for sites was undertaken to capture any additional opportunities.

During the consultation, the new Government consulted on revisions to the NPPF, including a revised approach to the Standard Method.

Although the outcome remained uncertain in autumn 2024, the Council commissioned DAC Planning to undertake a Green Belt Review using the draft NPPF, recognising that supply was unlikely to meet the Standard Method requirement.

Initial findings were reported to Members in January 2025 and later revised following updated Green Belt guidance issued at the end of February 2025.

Alongside this, site-level appraisals were undertaken for the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment.

The Advisory Visit took place on 27 February 2025, coinciding with publication of the updated Green Belt PPG. The Council therefore updated its Green Belt work to reflect the new guidance and accepted the Advisory Visit advice to undertake sustainable access appraisals and review site capacity and density, ensuring alignment with the NPPF requirement to make best use of land.

During the same period, the County Council's work on the LNRS was also concluding, and work on the transport assessment and the IDP were concluded.

The outcomes of the evidence work were reported to the Castle Point Plan Board throughout the process. A note of each board meeting was published on the Council's website

Prior to moving the Castle Point Plan to Cabinet for decision as to whether to progress to Regulation 19, the outcomes of the evidence, including the various constraints, were reported to the board in early July 2025. This was done not by way of committee report, but by way of slide presentation, with the substantive content later informing the Housing Capacity Topic Paper. A note of that meeting was also published.

This enabled the board to take a decision on how to proceed in terms of the final spatial strategy set out in the plan.

ENDS.