

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a man in a white t-shirt and dark shorts carrying a young child on his shoulders. They are standing in a field of tall, golden-brown grass. The sun is low in the sky, creating a warm, golden glow and long, soft shadows. The sky is filled with wispy clouds.

Meeting the Castle Point Challenge

A community commitment

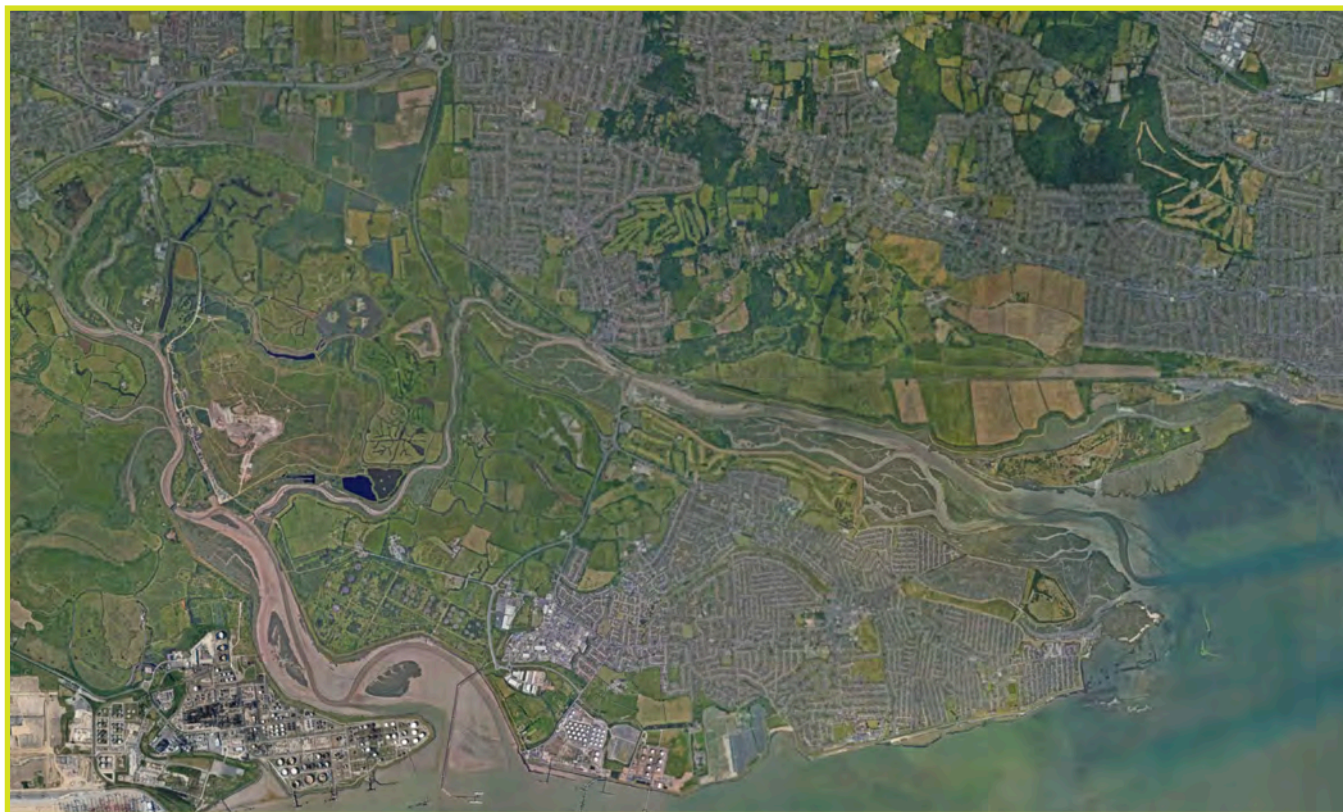


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Castle Point Borough Council is changing



As a council we are working collectively with our communities, so that we can achieve more for our residents.

We're ambitious for our place and our people, and this plan will outline our priorities for the years ahead, and how we intend to deliver them. We will do this in partnership with our residents, their communities and all the partner organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors who also work in our Borough.

Our focus is on the needs of our residents, businesses, and the environment in which we all want to flourish. We will ensure we continue to provide those services we know you rely on, like managing your green spaces, collecting your bins, providing you with timely

revenues and benefits services, running your valued leisure services and managing new development that provides real benefit.

We will ask you what you think about what matters to you, how we are doing and, and if you think we can do better, then please let us know and we will consider how we can.



Cllr Dave Blackwell
Leader



Cllr Warren Gibson
Deputy Leader

Our top Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)



1. Overall satisfaction with the local area
2. Satisfaction with maintaining parks and open spaces
3. Percentage of council housing meeting the Government Decent Home standard
4. Customer satisfaction with the Council
5. People who agree there is a strong sense of community in their area
6. Proportion of people who feel safe after dark
7. Number of affordable homes
8. Number of businesses operating in Castle Point

We will regularly report our progress in these priority areas.

Our People



Supporting physical & mental health & wellbeing



There is a shocking six-year difference in health life expectancy between the most and least affluent areas of our Borough. While no one factor can address this issue, we have long recognised the critical importance of activity on physical and mental health.

Castle Point Borough Council has its own in-house award-winning leisure service, and our two leisure centres, Waterside Farm and Runnymede, have a combined membership of nearly 14,000 users as well as numerous sports clubs and teams.

In 2023/24 we delivered an amazing 10,850 swimming lessons to local young people, equipping them with a vital life skill and enabling them to enjoy a relaxing and physically rewarding hobby.

But active lives aren't just about sport – for our younger residents, play is an important factor, and the 2023 Play Spaces fund saw an investment of £140,000 in the Borough. Waterside Farm's Castle Cove Soft Play annually hosts over 5,000 visits of active play.



Spotlight: Tackling obesity in children



At the last census, children in Castle Point were around 1% LESS likely to be obese or overweight in reception than children in Essex, but more than 5% MORE likely to be obese by Year 6 than other children in Essex.

43% of children and young people in Castle Point were physically active in 2021/22. This is lower than the rate across Essex.

Castle Point's children have not returned to activity levels seen pre-pandemic.

We will work to improve the health of our Borough's children.



Find your active in Castle Point



Castle Point Borough Council has secured a £227,000 investment from Essex County Council's Public Health Accelerator Bid (PHAB) fund to launch the 'Find Your Active Referral Campaign.'

This two-year project will build on the successful county-wide 'Find Your Active' initiative, transforming the Borough's recreational facilities into vibrant 'Active Wellbeing hubs.' These hubs will offer tailored resources and activities designed to address the unique health needs within our communities.

With a target of engaging 2,500 residents over two years, the Council aims to

measurably enhance the mental and physical health of its communities, and this project represents a significant step forward in its commitment to promoting proactive health measures and addressing health inequalities within the Borough.

Our commitment to the physical and mental health of all Castle Point residents is unwavering and will demonstrate the spirit of how we work as a Council. We will work with national partners like Sport England, as well as Essex County Council and Active Essex, and many of our fantastic local community organisations.

Our Places



A community commitment



Our customers and communities will continue to be at the heart of everything we do. We will work to enable communities to have a greater say over the things that are important to them.

We'll work with local residents, business, other public partners, the Canvey Island Town Board and community groups to explore how we can best use our buildings, parks, open spaces and funds to work together.

We will involve and listen to community experts about the best way services should be delivered in their areas. This will mean thinking differently about how services are delivered and who does what. By being flexible and open to change, we'll be able to design and deliver to better meet the changing needs of the Borough.

What does this mean for you? Put simply, if you think there is a better way to meet a local service need, then we want to hear it. Perhaps your community group has a proposal for how we could better use an existing budget to deliver a local service? Perhaps you're better placed to deliver a more bespoke, targeted and efficient service? We want to hear from you!



Spotlight: community allotments



Do you want to grow your own fresh fruit and vegetables? An allotment may be the thing for you. Allotment gardening enables you to grow your own fresh fruit and vegetables, get the benefits of fresh air and is a great way to meet new people.

There are eight sites across the borough, Castle Point Borough Council manage four sites, Canvey Island Town Council manage two and two are run by Allotment Societies. All of the sites are fenced and have a water supply. Romsey Road allotment site has its own car park and London Road allotment site has parking available on site for a few vehicles.



Find out more, or apply for the waiting list at www.castlepoint.gov.uk/allotments

Our assets: investing for the future



Castle Point Borough Council is investing in protecting and developing spaces and places which play an important role in our communities now so that they are secured for future generations. From our over £2 million investment in The Paddocks Community Centre to development of new sports facilities across the Borough, to the opening of the new Thorney Bay Pavilion and the refurbishment of the Knightswick Centre, we have ambitious plans for redevelopment and regeneration.

But we need to ensure that our assets deliver value for money for Council Taxpayers and so our investment must always be balanced by commercial operating models which will secure their future financial sustainability. This might mean that the Council won't always be the direct provider of services, but by working with other

organisations and partners, we will ensure that the right services get to the right people and that our residents and communities can access everything they are entitled to. Where we can, we will share our buildings with partners so that we can work together even more effectively.



Spotlight: Kiln Road - sharing space



The USP College on Kiln Road, Thundersley continues to thrive with student intake increasing again from September 2024.

The college requires additional office space to create additional teaching spaces at their campus.


The college has been exploring the opportunity to locate some of their staff into the Council office building.

They will join Essex Police, and community partners under one roof.

Our aim is to provide a hub, for a range of activities and partners that provides the best customer service.



Feeling safe in Castle Point

A photograph of a house at night. The house is dark, with a few windows visible. In the foreground, there is a bright, warm orange light source, possibly a street lamp, which creates a strong glow and casts long shadows. The sky is a deep orange, suggesting sunset or sunrise. The overall mood is quiet and somewhat somber, reflecting the theme of the text.

The Essex Residents Survey 2023 highlighted the public perception that safety, especially after dark, remains lower in Castle Point than in comparable parts of Essex, with only 42% of respondents reporting that they felt “fairly safe” or “very safe” after dark. This is despite levels of recorded crime in Castle Point being amongst the lowest in Essex.

Community safety is not just a matter for the Police and Emergency services. The Council also plays a vital role, bringing together partners as part of the Castle Point Council Community Safety Partnership.

In addition to our Policing colleagues, the Castle Point Community Safety Partnership is also made up of representatives from Essex Fire and Rescue, Environmental Services, Licensing, Trading Standards, other Housing Authorities and Health and Wellbeing Services.

Together the partnership seeks to promote community safety through public engagement events, business engagement events and days of action.

Spotlight: CCTV



Castle Point Borough Council, working with Southend City Council and Essex Police was recently successful in a bid for over £1 million funding for 60+ new CCTV cameras with the latest technology.

The new cameras will be located at sites including known hotspots for anti-social behaviour, crime and car meets, as well as in town centres to provide greater reassurance for visitors and businesses.

The cameras will protect, help catch and deter antisocial and criminal behaviour.



Our towns



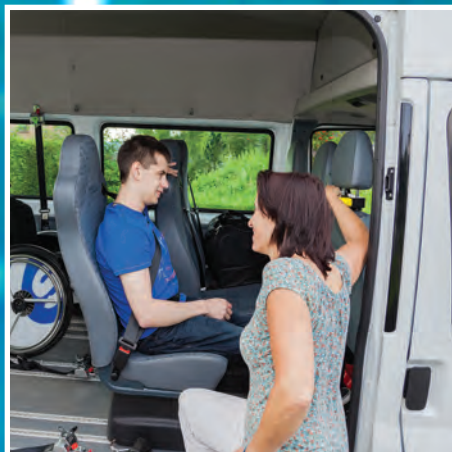
We want to promote a pride of place in our Borough and will work hard to ensure we have town centres, high streets, parks, coastline and open spaces which our communities can justly be proud of, and every year we spend over £1.5 million on keeping our Borough neat and tidy, including cutting an incredible 6.5 million square metres of highways verges and emptying nearly 10,000 litter bins!

In March 2024 we had the exciting news that Canvey Island had been awarded £20 million from the Government as part of the Long-Term Plan for Towns. This will provide the launch pad for improvements to safety and security, the high street, heritage and regeneration as well as transport and connectivity.

We are also working with Sport England and partners on a sports place partnership which will invest in healthier lifestyles and access to sport and recreation. The Borough will also host a major arts festival in 2025, the Thames Estuary festival, which we hope will be a springboard for artists, schools and community groups.



Customer Focus



Making the most of every pound & penny



Working within ever restricted budgets, we know how vital it is that every single penny is spent wisely. While our council is in a relatively sound financial position, this is a time of uncertainty regarding funding and of growing financial pressures and service demand.

We will carefully manage our budgets, ensuring we identify and maximise efficiencies, commercial opportunities, and funding streams.

As well as spending our money wisely, we will spend it locally wherever we can, by helping local businesses to bid for contracts with us.

We'll maximise the added value we provide to our communities by working with our suppliers to

deliver apprenticeships and exploring supported employment service provisions wherein people with disabilities are assisted with obtaining and maintaining employment. This will help residents access employment and gain crucial work skills.



Connecting with our communities and residents



We will improve our engagement and communication to listen to what our communities are telling us and to keep residents informed, allowing you to be kept up to date about council activity, how your money is being spent, and most importantly of all, ensuring you can hold us to account.

We will move away from outdated methods of customer contact and move towards systems which allow residents to interact with the council whenever they want to. We are improving our website and implementing new customer information management technology which will allow you to access a personalised secure online account. You will be able to perform routine transactional business online at a time that suits you without the need to call the council between set hours.

Adopting a digital by default approach will help us improve our focus on our customers' needs for those who are digitally able to do so. But for those who still need to call us by telephone – we'll still be here, waiting to take your calls and helping you as best as we can.



Spotlight: Castle Point Together



Castle Point Together magazine is delivered to every household to keep everyone informed and provide opportunities to engage and get involved.

A large part of engaging with residents is listening, but it is also important to provide all residents with information about what is happening.

That's the point of Castle Point Together magazine - to explain what we have done, are doing, the decisions we have taken and are taking – and what it all means to you.



Economy & Growth



THE CASTLE POINT PLAN



Your community. Your views.

A priority for the Council is creating a bright and prosperous future for Castle Point. Key to this is planning how our Borough will develop in the coming decades. We must ensure we have the right housing, infrastructure, green spaces and services to meet your needs as we change and grow.

The Castle Point Plan is the blueprint for future potential development in our area, and we are asking the community to help us shape your home. We know that you've told us that you want affordable housing which our young families can grow in, that you value our green spaces and beautiful landscapes, and you want less traffic congestion.

Our work to date has been informed by what you've told us that you want for the future of our borough.

We aim to submit the plan to the government in Spring 2025 and adopt it in early 2026. The plan will help us control development, best deliver infrastructure and defend against inappropriate speculative applications.



Growing our economy



We will support businesses and make the most of our seasonal visitor economy. We will make the most of the amazing assets in the Borough to generate more in tourism income, and for the first time in over a decade we will start to have more of a voice in the conversation by working with local partnership organisations such as Visit Essex, Film Essex and the Greater Essex Business Board.

We also know that people would like to work locally and so want to ensure that we work with businesses, existing and new, and the public and voluntary services to create great employment opportunities for local people to access.

It's vitally important that Castle Point has the right skills to support a varied economy, and that

our residents are best placed to get ahead. To this end, we will continue to encourage learning and achievement across all age groups and act as a strong voice to bring skills funding and development to our towns and colleges.



Spotlight: Partnership Working



In January 2024 small business from across the Borough came together to network and learn about going net zero.

The successful event, hosted jointly by Castle Point Borough Council and the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB), saw 24 business meet at the International House Business Centre.

The collaborative networking session was the first of its kind in the Borough and forms part of the new business support programme.



Our Environment



Your environment is precious to you



Our Borough is awash with a rich and varied tapestry of landscapes and natural habitats.

Our council has a vital role in looking after our environment and encouraging others to do the same. Our operational efforts play a day-to-day role in ensuring our local environment is clean and pleasant. Litter and fly-tipping is environmental vandalism – it's unpleasant, unnecessary and unacceptable. Not only does fly-tipping create an eyesore for residents, it is a serious public health risk, creating pollution and attracting rats and other vermin.

As well as collecting the Borough's waste we encourage reuse and recycling and reduce the amount of waste we send to landfill.



Our Street Scene team will continue its excellent role in keeping our Borough neat and tidy.

Looking after our parks and open spaces ensures we have pleasant, shared spaces to enjoy, where residents can walk and young people can play.

Spotlight: Street scene



There are 571 bins across the Borough which are made up of normal litter bins, recycling bins & dog waste bins.

In 2023/24 we emptied these nearly 10,000 times!

We cleared 1,137 fly tips in 2023/24, these were mostly household waste.

We have served over £4,000 worth of fines in recent years following investigations where evidence has been found.



Our environment



Looking forward, Castle Point Borough Council must play its part in adapting and mitigating the effects of climate change. We will move towards achieving net zero in our buildings and our fleet vehicles and must consider the impact on the environment of everything we do.

As a coastal location, the risk of flooding is very present, and we will continue to prioritise the important work we are doing with the Essex Flood Resilience Forum, a multi-agency partnership, made up of local councils, emergency services, health providers, the voluntary sector and many more organisations - working together to plan and prepare for a multi-agency response to a major emergency.

We are at the forefront of planning for greater accessibility to the wonderful natural environment in the Borough and helping others achieve their ambition. For example, working with the RSPB and Land Trust on Canvey Island and the Salvation Army on rewilding major parts of their massive estate in Hadleigh.



Spotlight: our energy efficiency



Waterside Farm Leisure Centre will receive a £98,800 investment to improve energy efficiency as part of the Swimming Pool Support Fund. This will fund energy efficiency measures by installing Photo Voltaic (PV) panels.

Next we will seek funding for decarbonisation of our corporate estate, including Kiln Road.

We are using grant funding to develop a decarbonisation plan which will help us bid for funding to improve the energy efficiency of our buildings and create a template for private building owners to use to achieve the same aims.





Castle Point Borough Council
Email: info@castlepoint.gov.uk

Our commitments

We will

Put people at the front of all our decisions

This means...

We will provide the services that matter and work with partners and the private sector to ensure that they meet the needs of the whole community.

Be transparent in our decision making

We will increase the number of council meetings we livestream so you can be informed about how we make decisions which affect you.

Promote pride of place in Castle Point

We will promote our Borough and why it is such a great place to live, work and visit.

Protect your environment

We will aim to protect the most valuable landscapes, open spaces and heritage in the Borough, for the benefit of residents and wildlife.

We will better plan the infrastructure

We cannot fix everything, but where new investment in schools, health, open space and transport is needed we will set out what that is, what it will cost and when it should be delivered.

Consult with you when we are considering service changes

You will have a say, and be listened to when we consider services which affect you and we will show how your views have been taken into account.

Maximise investment

We will develop partnerships and plans that mean we can be more successful in securing grant funding and other investment in the Borough.

Carry out a resident survey

We can be better informed by your views and ask you what you want rather than assuming we know.