



Statement of Common Ground

Castle Point Plan 2026 to 2043

Regulation 19 Pre-Submission Draft

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Between

-
Castle Point Borough Council

and

Southend on Sea Council

Castle Point Local Plan 2026 to 2043

Date: 5th December 2025

1. Introduction

1.1. This Statement of Common Ground identifies areas of agreement between Castle Point Borough Council (CPBC) and Southend-on-Sea City Council (SCC) in relation to Castle Point Plan 2026-2043 and supporting evidence base. There are no outstanding areas of disagreement.

1.2. This statement has been prepared to assist the examination of the Castle Point Plan. Southend- on- Sea Council made representations to Regulation 18 Consultation in issues and options and Regulation 19 Publication of the plan drafts published for consultation on 22nd July 2024 to 16th September 2024 and on 1st August 2025 to 26th September 2025 consecutively. SCC confirmed their response to the Regulation 19 Draft during the further consultation on 10th November 2025. SCC representations cover strategic cross boundary issues relating to:

1.2.1. The Vision and Objectives

1.2.2. Strategic Transport Connections

1.2.3. Housing Need SP2 and Housing Strategy SP3

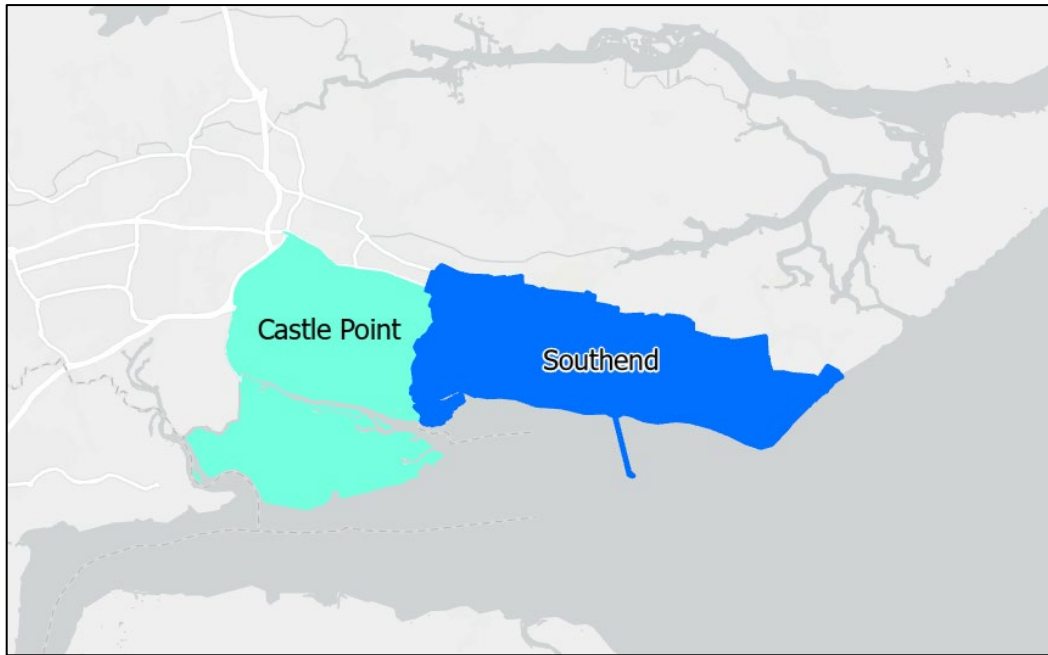
1.2.4. Environmental Policies ENV2 & ENV3 relating to Climate Change, Flooding, Essex LNRS and RAMS

1.2.5. Strategic transport connections

1.2.6. Green belt assessment

1.2.7. Growth along London Road

1.3. The map below shows the locations and administrative areas covered by this statement. Castle Point and Southend-on-Sea are neighbouring coastal areas in South Essex situated on the North bank of the Thames Estuary, they share an administrative boundary to the east of Castle Point. Southend-on-Sea is a coastal city and unitary authority, while Castle Point Borough Council governs the settlements of Canvey Island, Benfleet, Hadleigh and Thundersley.



1.4. The Castle Point 1998 Adopted Local Plan forms the development plan for the Borough. The Castle Point Plan will cover the period of 2026 to 2043 and aims to achieve growth through focusing on regeneration, brownfield redevelopment and increased density in urban areas whilst protecting its green belt and ensuring that growth is climate resilient and supported by essential infrastructure.

2. Duty to Cooperate

2.1. The councils of Basildon, Brentwood, Castle Point, Rochford, Southend on Sea, Thurrock and Essex County Council formed a strategic partnership in 2017 to develop a long-term growth ambition which would underpin strategic spatial, infrastructure and economic priorities in South Essex. The collaboration was underpinned by a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in January 2018¹ creating the Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA). In 2023 the leaders and Chief Executives agreed to refresh the identity for the partnership which is now known as South Essex Councils (SEC). The SEC's core purpose is to provide leadership for South Essex and to deliver a vision for the region up to 2050² in order to promote healthy growth for South Essex Communities. This is achieved through collaboration, by sharing resources, joint evidence and by lobbying government.

¹ https://www.basildon.gov.uk/media/8838/South-Essex-Joint-Strategic-Plan-Statement-of-Common-Ground-June-2018/pdf/South_Essex_Joint_Strategic_Plan_-_Statement_of_Common_Ground_-_June_2018.pdf?m=1545315901647

² <https://www.southessex.org.uk/opportunity-south-essex>

- 2.2. The SEC is supported by the South Essex Joint Officers Group which both CPBC and SCC officers attend, and the group meets regularly. Through joint working shared evidence is prepared and strategic issues along with local plan preparations are discussed.
- 2.3. At a regional level the Essex Planning Officers Association represents officers from all 14 local authorities in Essex including CPBC and SCC. Planning heads from each local authority meet several times a year to provide leadership and discuss strategic matters across all of Essex. Terms of reference including governance for this decision-making body was agreed in December 2020³.
- 2.4. CPBC also has one to one regular meetings with SCC to consider any specific cross border strategic matters, shared evidence and to appraise each other on their local plan preparation and any potential impacts.
- 2.5. CBPC has fully engaged with SCC on the development of its local plan from the outset. In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) regulations, SCC has been formally consulted at each stage of consultation on the Castle Point Plan. The Duty to Cooperate Compliance Statement (DATE) outlines in detail the engagement activities and outcomes together with the joint evidence base studies undertaken during the Plan's preparation and any protocols agreed which benefit strategic and cross boundary plan making.

3. Strategic Matters

- 3.1. South Essex's proximity to London and its position on the Thames Estuary have been the major factors behind the historical growth of South Essex and these will continue to be major influences on its future growth and wider relationship with the rest of Essex. London Southend Airport and the forthcoming Lower Thames Crossing which will link Essex via Thurrock to Kent will also provide economic opportunities for the area.
- 3.2. As neighbouring authorities CPBC and SCC are inter- connected in terms of transport connections, economic and employment ties, education and skills, leisure and sport, housing market overlaps and shared environmental interests including shared areas of Green Belt and the Thames estuary.
- 3.3. South Essex 2050 Ambition was initiated by the Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA) in 2018 and furthered by South Essex Councils (SEC) and aims to build on South Essex's economic opportunities. Its objectives are to

³ [Chief Officers' Group and EPOA Partnership - Terms of Reference](#)

prioritise growth that provides good digital infrastructure, improved transport connectivity, enhanced green and blue infrastructure opportunities, greater commercial development and employment skills and good quality housing in the right places.

3.4. The Castle Point Plan's vision and objectives are in accord with the South Essex 2050 Ambition and envisages a borough where residents have good quality and affordable homes in thriving communities with access to green spaces, economic opportunities, and amenities enabling them to fulfil their potential and live happy, healthy lives.

3.5. Both CPBC and SCC support the vision of South Essex as described in the South Essex 2050 ambition and agree to progress this vision through their plan making.

4. Infrastructure: Strategic transport connections.

4.1. The A127 or Southend Arterial Road provides a strategic east to west route across South Essex stretching from Southend through Castle Point to London Borough of Havering with direct access to the M25, A130 and A13. It is not trunked and spans three highway authorities and five local planning authorities. The route already experiences significant capacity issues, particularly at key junctions such as Fairglen Interchange a crucial link at Benfleet connecting the A127 to A130 for Chelmsford and Canvey Island and the Rayleigh Weir Interchange which connects A127 to A129 Rayleigh to Hadleigh.

4.2. Junction Modelling has been included in the CPBC Transport Assessment report and assessed the likely impacts of planned growth on the highway network in the Castle Point area. This included a high-level analysis of cross boundary traffic flows on key highway links including A13/London Road and A127.

4.3. SCC have carried out their own transport modelling and have also identified traffic pressures along the A127.

4.4. Essex County Council (ECC) is the local Highways and Transportation Authority and is responsible for local transport planning and the provision and maintenance of the highway network for Castle Point. SCC as a unitary authority has its own highways authority. ECC is preparing the Local Transport Plan, which is currently being updated to LTP4 with the collaboration of all Essex authorities. SCC is also preparing its own LTP for its own authority area. Essex is currently entering a transitional phase, with the election of a Mayor for Greater Essex and changes to Local Government structures as a result of devolution and local government reform, but Essex County Council with the collaboration of Essex authorities including CPBC and SCC are finalising the preparation of LTP4

to support the new structures once they are in place as well as guide the development in emerging local plans.

- 4.5. The SEC authorities and London Borough of Havering have prepared a statement of common ground⁴ with regards to the issues for sustainable growth and plan making that the A127 Transport Corridor presents. The Highway Authorities are also developing a joint Implementation Plan as part of the A127 Corridor for Growth (The Route Management Strategy) and along with the A127 Corridor Engagement Group are making the case for the A127 to be re-adopted as a trunk road up to the boundary of the City of Southend.⁵
- 4.6. Both CPBC and SCC support and are actively involved in these initiatives for improvements to the A127, and are also committed to working together to alleviate congestion at various pinch points on the A127 and along A13 London Road. Both Councils have regard to their respective Local Transport Plan within their local plans.
- 4.7. CPBC and SCC agree to continue to work collaboratively towards mitigating the cumulative impact of their growth plans on the shared transport routes including those which might arise from the regeneration of Hadleigh town centre. Both Councils also agree to work collaboratively with relevant organisations and neighbouring authorities to ensure that the necessary infrastructure is in place to support the growth needs set out in their Local Plans.

5. Housing Need

- 5.1. In December 2024, the government introduced changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) along with changes to the standard methodology for calculating housing need, from this the government set mandatory annual housing delivery targets which will require local authorities to plan for significantly more housing within the South Essex area.
- 5.2. The Housing Need as defined by the Government's Standard Methodology for CPBC over the planned period of 2026-2043 is 11,662, which equates to an average of 686 dwellings per annum. The annual housing delivery for Castle Point over the last 4 years averages at 100 dwellings per annum. Castle Point is 17.4 square miles in size with a population density of 4,976 per square mile. Over half of the borough is designated Green Belt and the majority of the borough is low lying land below sea level resulting in 45% of it in flood zone 3.
- 5.3. SCC agrees that Castle Point faces notable physical constraints including size, density and transport issues and environmental constraints with a substantial

⁴ SoCG A127 Corridor

⁵ [A127 Economic Growth Corridor | Essex County Council](#)

proportion of land designated as Green Belt and a significant proportion falling within Flood Risk Zone 3

5.4. CPBC has commissioned various pieces of work to review land availability throughout the Local Plan Making process including earlier work on Strategic Land Availability and Urban Capacity January 2023 and the Borough wide development options and technical paper July 2024 which identified land availability outside of Green Belt and through density modelling and site identification looked at the most effective use of this land for development.

5.5. CPBC have also prepared a Green Belt Assessment July 2025⁶ as guided by the NPPF to identify potential Green Belt sites for development. Identified sites were reviewed against further criteria: designated habitat and heritage sites; flood risk zones; transport restraints e.g. access issues or requirements for significant upgrades on highways impacting viability; and sustainability criteria. This work has been described in the Housing Capacity Topic paper July 2025⁷. CPBC also prepared the Strategic Land Availability Assessment July 2025⁸ and Site Assessments for Canvey Island⁹, Benfleet, Hadleigh, Thundersley and Daws Heath¹⁰ July 2025. The approach to site assessments is further supported by the Sustainability Appraisal July 2025.¹¹

5.6. CPBC has considered what housing delivery can be realistically achieved within its boundaries taking into account its significant environmental and infrastructure restraints as well as its market capacity. The evidence from the Green Belt Assessment, Strategic Land Availability Assessments, Housing Topic Paper and the recently finalised Porter Planning Economics Castle Point Housing Delivery Technical Note has identified that CPBC has the capacity to deliver 6,196 homes through the planned period. This is reflected in the Draft version of the Castle Point Local Plan.

5.7. CPBC realises that the Castle Point Plan delivers considerably less housing than the Standard Method Housing Need but considers based on the evidence that this is a realistic housing delivery.

⁶ [Castle Point Green Belt Assessment July 2025](#)

⁷ [Housing Capacity Topic Paper August 2025](#)

⁸ [Strategic Land Availability Assessment July 2025](#)

⁹ [Strategic Land Availability Site Assessment Canvey Island July 2025](#)

¹⁰ [Strategic Land Availability Site Assessment Benfleet, Thundersley, Hadleigh, Daws Heath July 2025](#)

¹¹ [Sustainability Appraisal Main Report July 2025](#)

5.8. Both CPBC and SCC have requested assistance from each other to meet their unmet housing need within their authority areas. Neither authority is in a position to assist with each other's unmet housing need

5.9. CPBC and SCC agree that the Castle Point Plan is proposing a lower housing delivery than the standard Method housing need.

Housing Strategy

6.1 Policy SP3 of the Castle Point Plan describes the housing strategy of delivering 6,196 homes of the planned period by focusing on brownfield redevelopment, regeneration of town centres and urban intensification.

6.2 The Castle Point Plans for growth along London Road and the A130 at B2 Tarpots Town Centre, B3 Former Furniture Kingdom site, B5 Canvey Supply, B7c 312-320 London Road (Queen Bee's), HAD1 Hadleigh Town Centre, HAD3 Hadleigh Clinic, THUN2 Kiln Road Campus. SCC recognises the growth potential along this route within its own Local Plan.

6.3 Both authorities have agreed to work together on preparing a consistent approach to urban intensification and to develop design guidance to ensure that development in bordering areas such as London Road is consistent in its quality and responds sensitively to the prevailing local character of the area.

6.4 CPBC agrees to engage with SCC early on in any development proposals to develop Hadleigh town centre.

7 The Environment and Climate Change

7.1 Supporting the environment to combat the effects of climate change and protecting and enhancing the area's green spaces is at the heart of the Castle Point Plan. Both CPBC and SCC are committed to reducing greenhouse emissions towards carbon net zero by 2050 through their local plans.

7.2 The Castle Point Plan is committed to improving biodiversity within its borough and in developing its housing strategy, has had regard for the Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy¹². Both CP and SCC have endorsed the Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy as a strategy for nature recovery in Essex.

7.3 The Essex Coast Recreational Disturbance Avoidance & Mitigation Strategy (RAMS)¹³ was prepared by a partnership of all 12 Essex Councils to ensure that the recreational impact from their shared growth on the Thames Coastal areas was avoided or mitigated for. The Essex coastline is designated under the UK Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (the Habitats Regulations) as part of the European Natura 2000 network and is an important habitat for many birds. Both CPBC and SCC worked with the other Essex Councils to develop the strategy which was led by Place Services at Essex

¹² [Local Nature Recovery Strategy | Essex County Council](#)

¹³ [Essex Coast Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy 2020](#)

County Council and implemented through Bird Aware Essex Coast. The strategy has been implemented by both authorities within their planning processes and RAMS tariffs are being collected. Both authorities agree to continue to work together through future Essex RAMs updates to protect the wildlife on the Essex Coastline.

7.4 South Essex is vulnerable to natural hazards such as floods, droughts and extreme temperatures due to climate change. Both Castle Point and Southend are at risk of flooding with approximately 45% of Castle Point's authoritative area being in Flood Risk Zone 3. Both councils are committed to mitigating flood risk. The Riverside Strategies will be prepared with all relevant South Essex Councils and the Environment Agency to ensure that the Thames Estuary 2100 Plan¹⁴ is implemented allowing for improvements to and management of flood defences. It also aims to improve public access to the coast and promote improvements to ecological networks and habitats.

7.5 The London Fenchurch Street to Shoeburyness railway line which connects Benfleet and Southend has been identified as an area of risk of tidal flooding. This is an important line for residents to access employment in each other's authority areas and for tourism. SCC and CBPC agree to work with partners within the railway industry and other relevant organisations to identify economically viable solutions to protect the railway line from future flooding events.

7.6 CPBC and SCC agree to collaborate with the Environment Agency, lead local flood authorities and neighbouring authorities to ensure that their Riverside Strategies for the Thames Estuary which include the Bowers Marshes, Canvey Island and Hadleigh Marshes are implemented, and recognising the opportunities for Two Tree Island near Leigh on Sea.

8. The Green Belt Assessment

8.1 Castle Point's Green Belt Assessment July 2025 reviewed all potential development sites within its Green Belt. Due to their shared boundary, the Green Belt is continuous to the east of Castle Point, around Hadleigh into the Leigh-on-Sea within Southend-on-Sea. Land South of Hadleigh (GB8) has been considered through Castle Point's Green Belt Assessment. Within the Regulation 18 consultation of the Castle Point Plan, SCC raised objections to this area being considered as grey belt due to its greenbelt function of separating the settlements of Hadleigh and Southend, as well as its historic context to Hadleigh Castle. The Green Belt Assessment has concluded that the site is not grey belt and GB8 was not brought forward as a development site within the Castle Point Plan.

¹⁴ [Thames Estuary 2100 \(TE2100\) - GOV.UK](#)

8.2 SCC will be updating its Green Belt study to reflect the NPPF 2024 and will engage with CPBC as a neighbouring Green Belt authority in relation to the study's methodology to ensure consistency.

8.3 SCC recognises the considerable constraints that CPBC has in meeting development needs within its authoritative area. SCC also has considerable environmental and physical restraints and equally is unable to meet the standard methodology housing need. SCC is therefore unable to assist CPBC in meeting its unmet housing need.

8.4 Following the revised NPPF 2024 and the introduction of the new standard methodology for calculating housing need, CPBC contacted its neighbouring authorities including SCC in January and February 2025 to assist with meeting that newly calculated housing need. This was in accordance with the Essex Planning Officer's Association (EPOA) Unmet Housing Need protocol. All responded with the view including SCC that at the time they could not offer any assistance in meeting CPBC's unmet housing needs. Likewise, given that CPBC is not able to identify sufficient sites to meet its own need, it cannot therefore accommodate unmet need arising from SCC during the plan period.

8.5 CPBC and SCC are working through the South Essex Joint Officers Group to try to address their unmet housing need. Part of this work includes reviewing the EPOA mechanism for considering unmet housing need established in 2017 and providing a shared joint position statement on the housing need within South Essex.

8.6 Both CPBC and SCC agree to continue to work collaboratively through SEC to address their unmet housing need within their respective authority areas.

9 Modifications to Castle Point Plan Regulation 19 Draft

9.1 SCC through their representation to the Castle Point Plan Regulation 19 Draft, identified three potential modifications to the Plan. These are set out below and resolve the representations from SCC. All modifications in this SoCG are also included in the Council's Modification Schedule.

- The Strategic Position of Castle Point within South Essex – diagram is to be updated to include Leigh Port as “Port Facilities”.
- Monitoring Framework Objective 19 – update the monitoring indicator to read as “~~submission~~ **percentage of** health impact assessments **submitted for relevant applications**”
- Monitoring Framework Objective 20 – additional monitoring indicator included to read as “**number of new community use agreements per year**”

10 Areas of Agreement

- 10.1 CPBC has worked collaboratively with SCC to ensure that all cross boundary strategic issues have been properly considered and where appropriate reflected in the Castle Point Plan 2026 to 2043, and effective and ongoing joint working has and will continue to be undertaken.
- 10.2 It is agreed that the Castle Point Plan 2026-2043 does not allocate sufficient sites to meet the Standard Methodology Housing Need for housing at this time. It is agreed that there are significant evidenced environmental, physical and infrastructure constraints which impact on this.
- 10.3 It is agreed that both CPBC and SCC will pursue strategies which include brownfield development and urban intensification and will explore collaborative design guidance for any closely connected areas such as A13/London Road.
- 10.4 It is agreed that infrastructure needs, need to keep pace with growth and both SCC and CPBC will work collaboratively to address the cumulative impact of their growth plans on shared highways and with all relevant organisations and neighbouring authorities to enable growth.
- 10.5 It is agreed both CPBC and SCC will support environmental strategies of Essex RAMS, Essex LNRS and the Thames 2100 Plan, The Riverside Strategies to protect designated sites, support nature recovery and mitigate flood risk in South Essex.

11 Areas of Uncommon Ground

- 11.1 Through the Duty to Cooperate, CPBC and SCC have jointly considered issues relating to housing, gypsy and traveller needs, jobs and employment, retail and tourism, natural environment, strategic site allocations and the sustainability appraisal. There are currently no areas of uncommon ground in relation to these topics.
- 11.2 SCC raised objection to the CPBC Regulation 19 Local Plan regarding its failure to meet identified housing need as defined by the national standard methodology, and the removal of Green Belt sites that had been previously considered suitable for development. Through further discussion between the authorities SCC can confirm that it has no evidence to suggest those discounted sites should be included within the local plan.

12 Additional Strategic Matters

- 12.1 There are no additional strategic matters which CPBC and SCC are aware of which has not already been addressed by this Statement of Common Ground.

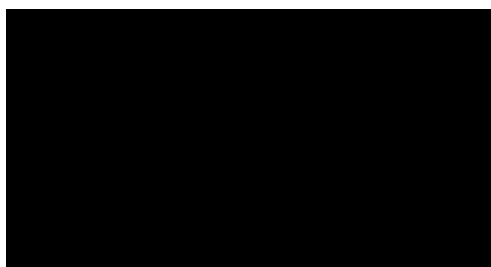
13 Monitoring

13.1 This statement will be maintained by CPBC and updated as necessary.

14 Signatories

14.1 The signatories agree that the Castle Point Plan has been prepared in accordance with the “Duty to Cooperate” imposed by Section 33A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 in that the Council has cooperated with SCC as a neighbouring authority, through constructive and ongoing engagement on the impacts of sustainable development set out in the Duty Cooperate State of Compliance and that there are no outstanding strategic planning issues to be addressed.

Castle Point

A large black rectangular box redacting the signature of Amanda Parrott.

Amanda Parrott
17/12/2025

Southend

A small black rectangular box redacting the signature of Mark Sheppard.

Mark Sheppard
05/12/2025