

# Castle Point Together

## Corporate Plan

Residents have their say

## Community grants

Local groups funded for local projects

Inside your  
winter 2025  
issue...

Thorney Bay update

Housing Improvement  
Plan

Healthier Habits  
Hubs

Community  
Commitments



# Welcome to Castle Point Together

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## Working to deliver our commitments to residents

Welcome to the latest issue of **Castle Point Together**. It has been a very busy six months with the administration working hard to deliver for our residents.

As part of our commitment to consulting with residents we have actively sought resident engagement. In the last six months we have run consultations on the Castle Point Plan, Waste and Recycling and most recently the Corporate Plan. Your feedback has been invaluable as we develop and move forward with our plans.

In this issue we bring you up to date on the Corporate Plan which outlines our aims and priorities for the

coming three years. We are pleased that so many of you have taken the time to respond to the consultation and your views will now be considered.

The Corporate Plan builds on the eight Community Commitments which we launched last year. These commitments underpin everything we do, and you can read about them and what it means for you further on in the magazine.

We are committed to ensuring that our residents are able to have their say and are listened to. We are very keen to hear from our residents so, if there are issues that you want to raise, then please get in touch.

**Cllr Dave Blackwell – Leader**



## Ambitious for Castle Point

**This is an exciting time for Castle Point as we have ambitious plans for the Borough.**

I am very proud to live in Castle Point and we want to ensure that there is a strong sense of pride of place in our community. A key priority for our administration is to promote why our Borough is such a great place to live, work and visit.

In the last issue we featured progress on the Castle Point Plan. The engagement sessions were very well attended, and we are very grateful to our communities for their contribution. The important work on delivery now continues

and we look forward to bringing you further updates. We remain committed to our pledge to protect the green belt, ensuring future generations will continue to enjoy our wonderful countryside.

We have a continued commitment to transparency with our residents so do please look out for our live streams of Cabinet, councils and committee meetings as well as the latest news.

We ♥ Castle Point and that's why we are committed to doing the best for our communities to make it the best place to live and work.

**Cllr Warren Gibson – Deputy Leader**





# Housing Improvement Plan

**The Regulator of Social Housing recently downgraded Castle Point Borough Council to C4. This means that the Council must put in place major improvements to the way it delivers its housing services, ensuring that all of our tenants' homes are safe, and tenants have a greater say in how we run our services.**

We spoke to Cllr Rob Lillis, Portfolio Holder for Health, Wellbeing and Housing to find out more about the findings of the Regulator, the actions that he will be taking as a result, and what it means for our tenants.

## What is The Regulator of Social Housing and what do they do?

The Regulator of Social Housing is the organisation responsible for setting good quality social housing standards. As a social landlord Castle Point Borough Council is expected to meet these standards.

Part of the Regulator's role is to inspect social landlords like

us and to report on how well we're performing against the standards.

## The Regulator judged Castle Point Borough Council to be a C4. What does this mean?

A C4 rating means that there are serious failings which need to be addressed.

## As Portfolio Holder for Housing what was your response to the judgement?

It is my ambition that all of our tenants are able to live in good quality, safe and affordable homes with good quality

## An interview with Councillor Rob Lillis

housing services so this is obviously very disappointing news.

We fully accept the findings of the Regulator, and I would personally like to apologise to tenants that we have fallen short of the standards. I would like to assure you that we are committed to putting things right.

## What are you doing to improve?

We're taking action urgently. To begin with we have launched a housing survey which we are asking our tenants to complete to tell us about their experiences.

Over the next ten months we are surveying the majority of our properties to fully understand the condition of our homes. We are hiring new contractors to speed up repair and maintenance work.

We're also ensuring that

“ It is my ambition that all of our tenants are able to live in good quality, safe and affordable homes with good quality housing services ”

accurate data is collected and recorded so we can be confident that all the health and safety requirements are being met.

Although we regret that we are in this position, this is an opportunity to put things right and our tenants will be central to that. We will be looking at every aspect of the housing services, from the first contact tenants make through to ensuring that improvements to our homes are completed to the highest standards.

## How will tenants know when you have improved?

We will be working closely with the Regulator to report on our progress.

We've also set up a new webpage where you get the latest information. You can find this at [castlepoint.gov.uk/housing-regulator](https://castlepoint.gov.uk/housing-regulator)

As a result of the improvements we are putting in place, I am confident that tenants will experience better housing services.

# Residents have their say on new Corporate Plan 2025 – 2028

In January we asked residents to have their say on our new Corporate Plan, which sets out our aims, priorities and the actions we will take to achieve them. This builds upon the Community Commitments made by the Council – you can read more about these on the back page.

Five new ambitions for Castle Point Borough Council were proposed, each with four key areas of focus

## 1 Working for a prosperous future

Supporting a vibrant local economy

Ensuring our residents have the right education and skills opportunities

Improving our transport

Attracting investment to our Borough



## 2 Healthier and safer communities

Making sure we have the right housing, to the right standards

Feeling safe in our Borough

Supporting healthier, more active lives

Encouraging community resilience, including volunteering opportunities



## 3 A cleaner and greener environment

Reducing our carbon footprint

Recycling more

Ensuring our streets and shared spaces are clean and tidy

Looking after our natural habitats



## 4 Restoring the Council to good health

Ensuring we have the right governance in place

Placing our Council on a sound financial footing

Measuring resident and customer satisfaction with the Council

Developing modern ways of working, while making sure those who need to can speak to someone



## 5 We ♥ Castle Point

Improving resident satisfaction with our town centres

Increasing pride of place in our Borough

Investing in Council and community assets

Making sure our parks and open spaces meet the needs of our communities



We expect that the final Corporate Plan will be published at the end of March so look out for it on our website.

# Community news

## Completion of Thorney Bay Pavilion gathers pace

The Mayor of Castle Point, Councillor Lynsey McCarthy-Calvert, cut the first turf on 18 March 2024 to mark the start of the construction phase of the new pavilion.

£1.45 million funding for the pavilion was awarded from the Ministry of Housing, Community and Local Government's Coastal Communities Fund and supplemented by £300,000 from our own resources. Work on the superstructure, flooring, external walls and flat roof has now been completed. Work on the additional car parking spaces is almost complete and just awaiting final fixtures.

The pitch roof presented some challenges with builders working in temperatures of minus nine degrees when the wind chill was taken into account. Work is expected to complete on the roof early this year and completion of the project in spring 2025. The new facilities will include a Pavilion



Café with seating indoors and outside, and feature external public toilets (men's, women's and disabled) and a foot-wash to get those sandy feet clean for those coming off the beach.

We have teamed up to market the Pavilion Café facilities with Canvey based Estate Agents Wilson Wood. The marketing will begin early this year, and we expect the café to be up and running before the Easter holidays. Plans to celebrate the opening of the new facilities will be posted on Castle Point Borough Council social media and, of course, the next edition of Castle Point Together will feature the finished building.

## THE GOOD DAYS · GOOD NIGHTS · GOOD TIMES PADDOCKS

RE-OPENING

Soon

## The Paddocks Centre set to reopen

**We have ensured that The Paddocks Centre is on target to reopen on 17 March 2025 following a period of closure for renovation.**

The centre has undergone a £2.3 million refurbishment to modernise the well-used community centre. The renovation includes improvements to both the interior and exterior of the building. The electrics, heating, lighting and ventilation systems have all been upgraded.

Recent works have included a full electrical rewire, drainage works, lower roof ductwork and fire protection work.

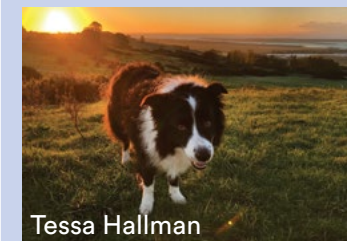
Cllr Dave Blackwell said: "We are pleased to be near the completion of this project. Our residents deserve to have a local centre that can serve the community well and this renovated centre will do just that. The investment will ensure that The Paddocks Centre remains an important asset for the Borough for the future".

## Picture perfect

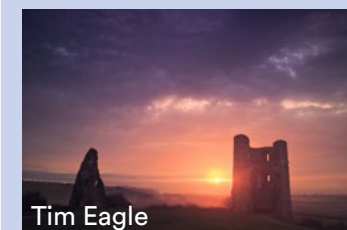
In the last issue we invited you to submit photography to appear in the magazine.

Thank you to Luke Ellis for our fantastic front cover image and to Kiera Gilley for the image on page two. We had some lovely entries featuring scenes from the district, some of which are shown below.

To see a selection of the shortlisted photos please visit our website.



Tessa Hallman



Tim Eagle



**REDUCE,  
REUSE,  
RECYCLE,  
REVIEW?**

More recycling? Reduced carbon footprint? Reducing costs?



## Positive response to Waste and Recycling Consultation

**More than 3,000 residents responded to our Waste and Recycling Consultation 2024.**

The results will help to shape our Waste and Recycling Strategy which sets out how we'll improve environmental sustainability while continuing to meet the needs of the community.

Cllr Michael Fuller, Portfolio Holder for the Environment said: "I would like to thank all the residents who took the time to complete the consultation.

"The Council will now analyse and consider the consultation results ensuring that any decisions taken reflect the views of our residents. We will engage with the community again ahead of any final decisions being made on the waste collection service."

## Local communities benefit from £100,000 in community grants

**Community groups, charities and voluntary groups across the Borough have received £100,000 in grants towards local projects. The grants have come from funding provided to the Council through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. An additional £105,000 has been raised by match funding from organisations.**

Examples of the successful grants awarded include:

- **£7,275** for infra-red heating panels to increase the number of events that can be held at the Hadleigh Old Fire Station community venue
- **£5,000** to support neurodivergent and disabled children, young people, adults and their parents or carers across the Borough
- **£4,300** towards recruiting, training, and inducting six new Family Support Volunteers
- **£5,000** towards currently unused rough grassland that will be transformed into community garden space called GROW at Winter Gardens Baptist Church on Canvey Island
- **£5,000** towards a project to provide peer support, parenting education and skills development for fathers in Castle Point
- **£5,000** towards an artist-produced guide for family-friendly activities across the Borough
- **£6,000** for an outside table tennis table and boules court for community use at John H Burrows Park in Hadleigh

For more information on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund visit [castlepoint.gov.uk/ukspf](https://castlepoint.gov.uk/ukspf)

## New poolpod at Runnymede Leisure Centre makes swimming more accessible

**A new state-of-the-art poolpod has been installed at Runnymede Leisure Centre, following an investment of £40,000.**

A poolpod offers a safe, dignified and independent way for people with limited mobility to enter and exit the pool. Swimmers can use the secure platform to lower themselves into the water, transferring from their wheelchair or walking

aid directly into the pool. It offers a more comfortable and independent swimming experience for people with limited mobility.

The investment is part of an ongoing commitment to improve accessibility and inclusivity at leisure facilities across the Borough. An additional poolpod will be installed at Waterside Farm Leisure Centre soon.

## Success for first Canvey Island Community Services Day

**Castle Point Association of Voluntary Services (CAVS) hosted its first Community Services and Information Day at the Knightswick Shopping Centre.**

CAVS offers a wide range of community services across Castle Point including

befriending, family mentoring and social prescribing.

As a charity it relies on a network of volunteers to deliver many of its day-to-day services. To find out about the varied volunteering opportunities available, please telephone **01268 214000** or email [volunteering@cavsorg.uk](mailto:volunteering@cavsorg.uk)



## Castle Point teams up with Sport England to get residents active

**One year ago, Sport England announced a major investment into hundreds of local communities across England. Their ambition was to get people active and reduce inequalities in physical activity.**

In response, partners from the voluntary sector, education, health, and local government have come together to tackle inactivity and boost physical activity. So far more than £251,000 has been invested into programmes to help Castle Point residents to get active.

### Some of the work includes:

#### Investment in leisure centres

Castle Point Borough Council has been awarded an additional £227,000 investment in leisure centres which includes the appointment of two new Wellbeing Ambassadors.

#### Mayor's 5K Fun Run

On Sunday 20 October Castle Point Borough Council hosted its first Mayor's 5k Fun Run at Waterside Farm Leisure Centre. In total 97 runners took part raising £724 for charity.

#### Essex Pedal Power

Essex Pedal Power provides free bikes to residents in disadvantaged communities to increase cycling, active travel and physical activity. So far more than 50 bikes have been distributed to Year 6 and Year 7 students across Canvey Island on free school meals.



#### The Gunny

Local charity Trust Links, in partnership with Canvey Island Big Local, is commissioning building work for The Gunny, a former WWII gun site. It will be transformed into a community hub with an outdoor gym, children's play area, therapeutic garden, and wildlife area. Work is expected to be completed this summer. [trustlinks.org/gunny-project/](https://trustlinks.org/gunny-project/)

The ambition is to invest a further £1 million from Sport England in Castle Point over the next three years into helping inactive residents lead healthier and more active lifestyles.

Keeping active is essential for our mental and physical health and general wellbeing, so it is crucial we continue to break down barriers for people to stay fit and healthy.

For inspiration visit Castle Point Leisure at [castlepointleisure.co.uk](https://castlepointleisure.co.uk)

## Healthier Habits Hubs

**On Monday 25 November, partners from Castle Point and Rochford Health and Wellbeing Board and Essex County Council's Public Health team hosted the first Healthier Habits Hub at St. Nicholas Hall in Canvey. These events provide free, non-judgemental guidance on topics including mental health, weight management, substance misuse and sexual health.**

A marketplace was held in the main hall where 25 different service providers held their stalls. Representatives from Trust Links, Castle Point Association of Voluntary Services, Citizens Advice, The Megacentre, and Castle Point Leisure were among those in attendance.

There were many free giveaways for the public, including warm bags filled with healthy snacks, cup-a-soups, knitted items like blankets, hats, and scarves

from United in Kind's Hug in a Shrug group and swimming vouchers.

Look out for more information on Castle Point Borough Council's social media page to see when the next event will be taking place.



# New Community Commitments

Eight new Community Commitments have been launched as part of the Castle Point Challenge.

**The Castle Point Challenge sets out our ambitious plans for the development of the Borough and how we intend to deliver them. The Community Commitments focus on key priorities which include the environment, infrastructure and investment. There is also a promise to consult with residents over proposed service changes and to take residents' views into account.**

Cllr Dave Blackwell, Leader of Castle Point Borough Council said: "We're ambitious for the people and places of Castle Point and the Castle Point Challenge sets our priorities for the coming years and how we're going to deliver them.

"We can't do this alone, and these priorities will be delivered working in partnership with residents, businesses and partners from across the public, private and voluntary sectors."

Cllr Warren Gibson, Deputy Leader of Castle Point Borough Council said: "We're committed to asking our residents about the issues that matter most to them and, where residents say we can do better, we promise to listen and consider how."



The eight **Community Commitments** are:

## We will...

## This means...



**Put people at the front of all our decisions**

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 service changes 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.