

Castle Point Together

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summer 2025
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Welcome to Castle Point Together

Delivering positive change in Castle Point



Welcome to the summer issue of **Castle Point Together**. While the seasons might change, our energy and focus on delivering positive change across our Borough continues.

We're very pleased with the excellent response we've had to the recent street lighting consultation. Your feedback is being carefully analysed before we consider the next steps. It is thanks to our strong financial management, that we are able to consider funding the additional lighting from 1am – 5am. We never forget that it is Council Tax payers' money and that we have a duty to invest and spend every pound wisely.

On the theme of consultations, we recently

launched a new public consultation on the Castle Point Plan. It's a chance for you to help guide the future of our community - from housing and infrastructure to green spaces and local services. It has been shaped by extensive engagement with communities, businesses and stakeholders including surveys, in-person sessions and an "Engagement Through Art" programme. Please take a moment to get involved.

Remember, that staying connected with us is easy. Follow us on social media, watch our Cabinet Meetings and Committees on YouTube and check our website for the latest news. We're here and we're listening.

Cllr Dave Blackwell – Leader

Representing Castle Point in Essex and nationally



As **Deputy Leader**, I'm proud to work alongside our Council colleagues to champion your needs and represent Castle Point both within Essex and nationally.

We're continuing to deliver for the Borough - even as national discussions around Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) press on. Castle Point remains firmly at the table in all discussions and negotiations and our focus is on delivering on local priorities and keeping our voice strong.

We're listening closely to you, and I encourage everyone to have their say in the Castle Point Plan consultation. This Plan is built on what our residents

told us matters most - protecting the green spaces that define Castle Point, while making sure new homes and infrastructure are delivered in the right places and at the right scale. Please take this opportunity to have your say.

Our residents are at the heart of everything we do so we're also proud to introduce our new Customer Service Standards: Clear, Respectful, and Efficient. These standards guide how we communicate, support digital and face-to-face access, and make sure everyone is treated with dignity and fairness. You can view these on our website.

Cllr Warren Gibson – Deputy Leader

Meet our new Mayor

Cllr Barry Campagna



In May this year a new Mayor for Castle Point was elected, Cllr Barry Campagna. We spoke to Barry about his journey to becoming Mayor and what the role involves.

I was born in Islington in 1954 and moved to Canvey Island in 1964. After many years working in construction and building maintenance, I joined the Canvey Island Independent Party, driven by a desire to make a difference rather than simply moaning about things.

I was elected as a Councillor for South Ward in 2012 and have proudly served ever since. One of my earliest promises was to help restore Canvey Seafront, which led to the creation of Canvey Baywatch. Together with 25 dedicated volunteers, we transformed Thorney Bay beach and now also maintain the Bumble Bee Garden in the Labworth car park.

I was Town Mayor of Canvey Island in 2018/19 and became Mayor of Castle Point in May 2025. Wearing the Civic Regalia, attending events and representing our Borough as First Citizen fills me with pride. My role includes engaging with schools, charities, businesses, community and voluntary groups, strengthening connections across Castle Point and promoting Council initiatives.

Supporting my chosen charities - Karis' Helping Hand, Canvey Island Transport Museum, and Thundersley Air Training

“One of my earliest promises was to help restore Canvey Seafront, which led to the creation of Canvey Baywatch.”

Corps is central to my mayoral role. I look forward to hosting fundraising events and continuing to promote our remarkable Borough.

For further information on the Mayor visit castlepoint.gov.uk/council-mayor or follow the Mayor of Castle Point on Facebook and Instagram.

Housing Improvement Programme making progress

We're making strong progress in our Housing Improvement Programme, aimed at transforming housing services and ensuring homes meet key safety and regulatory standards.

Following very serious concerns raised by the Regulator of Social Housing last year, we committed to making urgent reforms. Now, with a Housing Improvement Board firmly in place and a raft of actions underway, progress is gathering pace.

Among the key achievements is bringing the housing repairs service back in-house to improve oversight and responsiveness. Our main repairs contractor has increased its repair staff by 50% and reduced overdue cases by 68%, while new contractors have been procured for technical works.

Tenant involvement is also being prioritised, with a new partnership with the Tenant Participation and Advisory Service (Tpas) ensuring residents' voices are heard.

On the safety front, inspections and upgrades are well underway across gas, electrical, and fire safety, alongside the launch of a Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy. Infrastructure reviews are ongoing, with fire door replacements and alarm improvements planned.

Portfolio Holder for Health, Wellbeing and Housing, Cllr Rob Lillis, said: "While there's more to do, we are on track and committed to lasting improvements."

With a full stock condition survey due by October and new systems in the pipeline, the Housing Improvement Programme is beginning to deliver real change.

Contact your Council

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Website
castlepoint.gov.uk

Phone
01268 882200



Have your say:

Shape the future of Castle Point through the new Castle Point Plan

Castle Point Borough Council has unveiled a draft of the new Castle Point Plan - an ambitious Plan to guide development across the Borough to 2043. The Plan is now open to public consultation, giving residents a chance to help shape the Borough's future.

Replacing the outdated 1998 Local Plan, the Castle Point Plan outlines a clear vision built on what matters most to the community: green space protection, sustainable development, and vibrant, well-connected town centres. It has been developed through extensive engagement with residents and communities - including surveys, local

sessions, and an innovative "Engagement Through Art" programme. The Castle Point Plan reflects a wide range of voices and insights from across Castle Point and has identified key priorities for the community around protecting and improving open spaces, green spaces and the Green Belt, and improving community and transport infrastructure.

Strategic priorities

The draft Plan is built around four big priorities that will guide development across Castle Point:

- Protecting and improving green spaces: The Plan puts nature first—supporting parks, green areas, and local biodiversity so that residents can enjoy more access to beautiful and healthy environments.
- Meeting local needs for homes and jobs: The Plan identifies where new housing and business spaces should go, helping Castle Point grow in a smart and balanced way.
- Investing in infrastructure and community services: Developers will be expected to help fund things like schools, roads, healthcare, and community facilities - so that growth benefits everyone.
- Using urban land wisely: New development will be focused in existing towns and urban areas, with guidelines that make sure building densities are sustainable and suitable for each location.

What does the Castle Point Plan include?

Over the 17-year Plan period, Castle Point will see around 6,196 new homes built, along with expanded commercial and employment spaces to support the local economy. Crucially, the Plan rules out development on Green Belt land, reinforcing the Council's commitment to both environmental preservation and thoughtful urban expansion.

Each settlement within Castle Point will benefit from tailored place-based policies, aimed at protecting heritage, supporting thriving town centres, and fostering community-friendly growth. Our policies will also require affordable homes for local people and more environmentally friendly new homes and buildings.

Get involved

The public consultation will run for eight weeks until 26 September 2025.

There will be opportunities to attend information events to explore the consultation and Plan in more detail. Every voice counts in building the future of Castle Point.

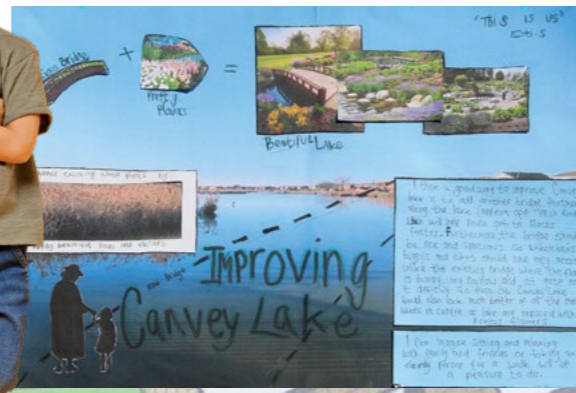
For more information or view the Plan and share your views, visit: www.castlepoint.gov.uk/castle-point-plan



Residents told us about their local town centres as part of the This is Us Desire Paths project (photo is from the Hadleigh Desire Paths walk)



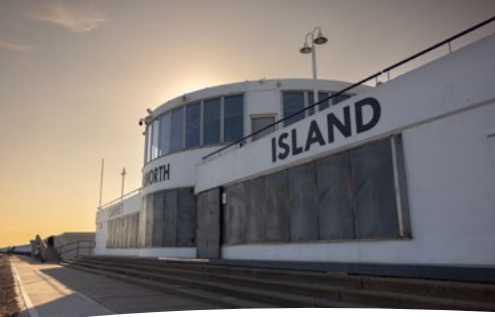
Local children have expressed their ideas about the future as part of the This is Us project (photos are of ideas for Canvey Lake and ideas for Benfleet)



The Castle Point Plan reflects a wide range of voices and insights



Residents discussed the importance of heritage to place as part of the This is Us Timescapes project



The Economic Development Team attending a business event.



Neighbourhood Board to lead £20 million Canvey Island transformation

The Government has confirmed £20 million of funding over the next decade to support communities on Canvey Island through the UK Government's newly rebranded Plan for Neighbourhoods Fund (formerly the Long-Term Plan for Towns).

A Neighbourhood Board made up of local business leaders, community organisations, Castle Point Borough Council, Essex County Council, the NHS, Police and the local MP will lead the project, working with residents to identify priorities and shape investment.

The funding will be targeted across eight key areas: safety, regeneration, transport, housing, work, cohesion, health and education.

The Council will support delivery and manage the fund, while the Board's first task is preparing a Regeneration Plan to outline how the money will be used.

This initiative marks a major opportunity to support local projects and address issues that matter most to Canvey Island residents.

Supporting local enterprise in Castle Point

Castle Point Borough Council's Economic Development Team champions local entrepreneurs across Benfleet, Canvey Island, Hadleigh and Thundersley.

Whether you're a start-up, scaling up or long-established, the team offers tailored advice, resources and growth networks. Our fully funded

Business Accelerator Programme delivers expert-led workshops, mentoring and tools to success.

Stay informed through the Council's fortnightly business support newsletter, packed with funding updates, events and more. For more information email business@castlepoint.gov.uk

Local Government Reorganisation in Essex: What you need to know

Essex is undergoing a major reorganisation of its local councils, driven by central government. The current system of 12 district and borough councils, one county council and two unitarities is set to be replaced by new unitary authorities that will handle all local services in their areas.

Castle Point Borough Council supports a model with five unitary authorities, aiming to preserve local identity while improving efficiency. However, Essex County Council and some other councils favour fewer councils, arguing it would be more cost-effective. All proposals will be submitted to the Government by September 2025.

The goal is to simplify governance, save money and improve services. It's also part of a broader devolution plan, which will bring a directly elected mayor for Greater Essex. If approved, new Councils could be in place by April 2028.

Grants available for Hadleigh shop front transformations

Hadleigh shop owners can now apply for grants of up to £3,000 to improve their shop fronts, thanks to a new initiative from Castle Point Borough Council. Funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, the scheme aims to boost the appeal of the town centre in line with the Hadleigh Town Centre Vision.

The grants can support improvements such as replacement signage, windows, doors, gutters, and accessibility upgrades. Businesses located on London Road, Rectory Road, Oak Road and Castle Lane are eligible. Both freeholders and tenants (with landlord consent) may apply, and applicants are advised to consult the Hadleigh Town Centre Design Guide before submitting an application.

As part of the Shop Front Improvement Programme for Hadleigh, there will also be a programme of visual merchandising training with expert advice on how to make shopfronts look as attractive as possible. This includes a workshop and 1-1 support for ten businesses. Businesses do not need to apply for the grant to attend this training. For more information visit castlepoint.gov.uk/shop-front-grants

Spotlight on the Environmental Health Team

Most people don't give a second thought to clean restaurants, quiet streets or safe public spaces. But behind the scenes, the Environmental Health Team is hard at work - protecting the Castle Point community across a wide range of responsibilities.

From ensuring food safety to overseeing animal welfare, ensuring housing standards, and responding to environmental nuisances, our Environmental Health Team plays a vital role in keeping our environment healthy, habitable, and humane.

One of their most visible roles lies in food safety. Officers conduct regular inspections of restaurants, cafés and food outlets to ensure cleanliness,

hygiene and proper handling practices. They also investigate complaints involving pests, dirty kitchens, and contaminated food - sometimes acting swiftly to prevent public health risks.

As well as looking after human safety, the team also ensures that businesses caring for animals meet high welfare standards. Under animal licensing, they inspect and regulate kennels, catteries, pet shops, riding establishments,

and even dangerous wild animal establishments. They also license breeders and boarders.



Cllr Michael Fuller applauds the Environmental Health Team's commitment to food hygiene

The Environmental Health team plays a vital role in keeping our environment healthy, habitable, and humane

Another critical but often overlooked area is environmental nuisance. Whether it's noise from industrial sites, odours from commercial kitchens, persistent smoke, or unmanaged waste attracting vermin, the team investigates and ensures statutory requirements are met.

The Environmental Health Team also leads on air quality monitoring, housing standards, public health response, licensing caravan sites,

regulating body treatments like tattooing and acupuncture and even enforces standards for private water supplies. They are, in every sense, the silent guardians of everyday wellbeing - keeping problems from becoming crises and helping our community run safely and smoothly.

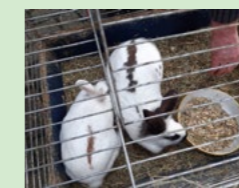
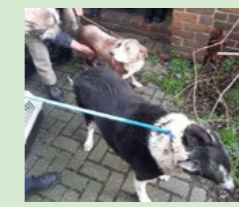
To find out more about the work of the Environmental Health Team visit castlepoint.gov.uk/environmentalhealth

Case Study

Following a routine inspection of a takeaway, the team uncovered significant hygiene breaches, including evidence of mice and improper food storage. The premises was temporarily closed while improvements were made - a clear reminder of the team's fast, effective action in keeping the public safe.

Case Study

In one investigation, the team seized neglected animals. Working with rehoming partners, they provided care and gave the animals a new start, while holding the owner accountable.



Number of animals rescued:

56 rabbits One cat
Two guinea pigs One parrot
Two dogs One chicken



Case Study

The Environmental Health Team successfully prosecuted a Benfleet resident who failed to comply with a noise abatement notice. The resident repeatedly played loud music, disturbing a number of their neighbours. The subject was ordered to pay a fine, a victim surcharge and a contribution towards the Council's costs.



Renew your postal vote before January 2026

Following updates introduced by the Elections Act 2022, all UK voters who applied for a postal vote before 31 October 2023 must submit a new application by 31 January 2026 to continue voting by post. If a new application isn't received by this deadline, voters will need to vote in person until they reapply.

We encourage residents to renew early to ensure their voting preference remains in place for all future elections including the Mayoral election scheduled to take place in May 2026.

We contacted all affected postal voters that we hold an email address or mobile phone number for in June and July of 2025. Any affected electors we do not hold an email address or mobile phone number for will be sent a letter in the post in September of 2025.

The easiest way to reapply is online via the official government website: www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote

For local information and assistance, visit Castle Point's postal vote reapplication page here: castlepoint.gov.uk/postal-vote-reapplication/



Castle Point awarded nearly £1 million to promote active lifestyles

Castle Point is set to receive £999,635 in Sport England funding to support a wide range of physical activity initiatives across Canvey Island, Benfleet, Hadleigh and Thundersley. This significant investment is part of Sport England's Place Partnership programme, which is supported by National Lottery and Exchequer funding.

Designed to encourage movement and improve wellbeing, the programme will tackle everyday barriers that prevent residents from staying active. Projects will focus on engaging young people, supporting older adults, and transforming public spaces into welcoming, activity-friendly environments.

Castle Point joins Harlow and Thurrock as new areas selected for funding, building on the success of the Essex Local Delivery Pilot. With initiatives like Essex Pedal Power and The Gunny Project already thriving, the groundwork is in place for real impact.

Residents will help shape the future of these efforts through community-led planning and design. This is a powerful step toward healthier, more connected communities.

Learn more at activeessex.org/place-partnerships

This is a powerful step toward healthier, more connected communities.



THE WAY YOU RE-APPLY FOR A POSTAL VOTE HAS CHANGED

Postal votes now expire every three years.