

### 11. Building a Strong, Competitive Economy

#### Economic Strategy

##### Policy Context

**11.1** The *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)* sets out the Government's policies in relation to planning for a strong and competitive economy. It makes clear that local planning policies should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, considering both local needs and wider opportunities for development.

**11.2** The *NPPF* sets out that local planning policies should set out a clear economic vision and strategy which positively and proactively encourages sustainable growth. They should also set criteria for local and inward investment to match the strategy, address potential barriers to investment be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the Plan, allow for new flexible working practices, and enable a rapid response to changing economic circumstances.

##### Reasoned Justification

**11.3** Evidence in relation to the economy, employment and economic growth in Castle Point is set out in the *South Essex Economic Development Needs Assessment (EDNA) 2017*. This report identifies the key strengths and weaknesses in the economy within Castle Point.

**11.4** The key strengths were identified as: low unemployment; reasonable transport links; above average business formation rates and high levels of self-employment indicating entrepreneurial activity; low cost base (premise and wages); and resilient manufacturing base less affected by global pressures.

**11.5** The key weaknesses were identified as: lack of modern employment premises; out commuting for work; below average skills and workplace wages; low representation in growth and knowledge based sectors; cutbacks in public sector employment; no strong sectors with growth potential businesses; limited attraction to inward investment; and competition from larger centres nearby.

**11.6** The consequence of these weaknesses is a low level of business output. As a key measure of productivity gross value added (GVA) per head in Castle Point is low, with the area ranking in the bottom 40% of districts nationally. In 2014, GVA per head in Castle Point was £12,996.70, this is almost half of the GVA experienced in the neighbouring authority of Basildon. Due to low local wages, many of Castle Point's residents commute out of the borough for work. 19% commute to London, whilst 12.7% and 14.7% commute to the local centres of Basildon and Southend-on-Sea respectively.

**11.7** Modelling was undertaken in the *South Essex EDNA 2017* to determine the existing supply of, and future demand for employment land and space. Castle Point's employment land supply comprises six active employment sites totalling 79 hectares and three potential employment sites totalling 22 hectares, providing 103 hectares in total. The six existing sites identified are:

- The Castle Point Council Offices in Kiln Road, Thundersley,
- Charfleets Trading Estate, Canvey Island
- Manor Trading Estate, Thundersley

- Stadium Way, Hadleigh
- Lychgate Industrial Farm, Thundersley
- Gas and oil Receptor storage facilities (Oikos and Calor), Canvey Island

**11.8** In the case of the Council Offices in Kiln Road and the Lychgate Industrial Farm, neither are shown on the Policies Map as existing employment areas. If these sites were redeveloped, it is expected that the uses will be transferred elsewhere or retained within a new development, thereby safeguarding the employment. Exclusion as employment areas will allow greater flexibility in the event of their redevelopment which will support the viability of any redevelopment to fund the uses relocation.

**11.9** It is necessary for this plan to protect both existing and potential employment sites, since the *EDNA 2017* also found that there is an additional need of 1 hectare of employment land and 6,605 square metres of space to support employment growth of 462 jobs in Castle Point, including the relocation of industrial needs from London.

**11.10** In order to make Castle Point a more attractive location for businesses and a local workforce, there is a need to improve the quality of employment areas and provide a greater flexibility in the supply of premises to attract investment and encourage indigenous companies to stay in the borough as they grow. The office market in Castle Point is under-developed and is unlikely to feature as a destination for non-indigenous businesses. There is a need to develop this market overtime to provide the necessary range of accommodation to support a diverse local economy. The Council will seek the provision of suitable, flexible floorspaces that can be used by offices and knowledge-based businesses, as well as small business units and specific start-up facilities which will support indigenous business growth.

**11.11** The Castle Point Regeneration Partnership is in place to address some of the issues mentioned above. Around the environmental quality of the estates, new gateways and signage has already been delivered at Charfleets Industrial Estate and Manor Trading Estate. However, there remains an issue with the quality of the private realm in these areas. With regard to training meanwhile, two new secondary schools and a Skills Campus to deliver further education courses have been delivered on Canvey Island.

**11.12** The ambitions of partners in the South Essex sub region, from the South East Local Enterprise Partnership to the Castle Point Regeneration Partnership, is to develop a series of measures related to education and skills provision that will ensure that there is greater alignment between the needs of local businesses and the training on offer. In particular, there will be new investment in training for advanced engineering, logistics and digital media within the sub-region with specialist advanced engineering opportunities at USP (SEEVIC) college in Thundersley.

## **Strategic Policy EC1**

### **Economic Strategy**

- 1. In order to support the wider economy in South Essex, the economy of Castle Point will be enhanced through:**
  - a. The protection of the existing employment land as shown on the policies map for uses falling within the B Use Classes of the Use Classes Order;**

- b. The provision of at least an additional 24 hectares of land identified for employment development falling within the B Use Classes of the Use Classes Order; and
- c. Support for the provision of at least an additional 1 hectare of land and 6,605 square metres of floorspace elsewhere in the borough for employment development falling within the B Use Classes of the Use Classes Order.

**2. This will be achieved by:**

- a. Working with partners to deliver improvements to the quality of public space within employment areas in Castle Point, including the quality of open spaces, landscaping, roads, drains and communication infrastructure;
- b. Encouraging the improvement and redevelopment of private land within existing employment areas in order to enable business growth and improve the attractiveness of these areas;
- c. Maintaining a flexible employment land supply within established and proposed employment sites identified on the Policies Map, to provide or deliver employment floorspace for employment development falling within the B Use Classes of the Use Classes Order;
- d. Seeking the provision of suitable, flexible floorspace that can be used by office or knowledge-based businesses; and
- e. Seeking the provision of small business units and specific start-up facilities to support indigenous business growth.

**3. Applications for uses falling outside Use Classes B of the Use Classes Order will be permitted within the employment areas of this plan where they accord with the following criteria:**

- a. It can be demonstrated that the use will provide an equivalent number of jobs compared to an employment development falling within Use Classes B of the Use Classes Order use of the site; and
- b. It can be demonstrated that the location of the use within an employment area will not undermine the vitality or viability of local town centres or local shopping parades.

## **New Employment Land**

### **Reasoned Justification**

**11.13** The *South Essex EDNA 2017* identified a need for additional 24 hectares of employment land to be made available throughout the borough.

**11.14** This plan identifies three locations where new employment uses are proposed:

- East of the Manor Trading Estate in Thundersley
- Extension to Charfleets Industrial Estate
- South of Northwick Road

### **East of Manor Trading Estate**

**11.15** Land to the east of Manor Trading Estate has been promoted to the Council for employment purposes and appears to be deliverable. It is expected that access to the site will be achieved through the existing estate, or through the redevelopment of some land within the existing estate.

**11.16** The land was designated as Green Belt in the *1998 Castle Point Adopted Local Plan*. The *Green Belt Review* indicated that this site could be removed from the Green Belt without undermining the purpose of the Green Belt in this location.

**11.17** The site was identified as a Potential Local Wildlife Site in the *Local Wildlife Site Review* as the *NPPF* expects a net gain in biodiversity, compensation for the loss of biodiversity from the Local Wildlife Site must be provided.

**11.18** Land in this area falls within a Critical Drainage Area (CDA) as identified in the Essex County Council Interactive Flood Map. It is therefore necessary for any development within this area to include appropriate drainage arrangements that do not increase the risk and ideally reduce the risk of flooding to other properties in the area, consistent with criteria set out in the *NPPF*.

**11.19** This site should be accessed from the Manor Trading Estate only. Highway improvements may be required in the area to support the additional commercial traffic.

### **Extension to Charfleets Industrial Estate**

**11.20** The extension to Roscommon Way, which provides access for the site, has now been completed. Planning permission has also now been granted, and so this site is now reasonably available for employment development and is considered to be deliverable.

**11.21** The *South Essex EDNA 2017* recognises this site as suitable for meeting Castle Point's employment needs.

**11.22** The site is adjacent to a Local Wildlife Site as identified in the *Local Wildlife Site Review 2019*, and, as the *NPPF* expects a net gain in biodiversity, compensation for the loss of biodiversity from the Local Wildlife Site was considered as part of the planning application process.

**11.23** Development proposals at this site have also been designed to achieve resilience and resistance to flood risk, and designed to manage surface water drainage issues on site and prevent an increased risk of flooding by surface water to other land and properties nearby. These matters have also been addressed in the planning application process.

### **South of Northwick Road**

**11.24** This site was allocated in the *1998 Castle Point Adopted Local Plan*. Although it has not been developed to date, applications and approvals support employment provision on this site.

**11.25** The allocation in the *1998 Castle Point Adopted Local Plan* covered 18 ha of land. However, the designation of the Canvey Wick Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in 2005 covered approximately half the site and so only 9.7 ha are now available for development purposes. Development proposals have been considered for any adverse impact on the SSSI and also provide mitigation and compensation for any biodiversity impacts on site.

**11.26** The site is at a prominent location at the junction of Roscommon Way with Northwick Road. It is therefore important that the design of this development reflects this location, and that any buildings located to the north-east of the site are of sufficiently high quality to act as a landmark for Canvey.

**11.27** Development proposals at this site have been designed to achieve resilience and resistance to flood risk, and designed to manage surface water drainage issues on or adjacent to the site and prevent an increased risk of flooding by surface water to other properties nearby.

**11.28** This site currently benefits from planning permission and has evidenced that development is able to take place with appropriate flooding and biodiversity mitigation that will not affect the viability of the development coming forward.

## **Local Policy EC2**

### **New Employment Land**

**New employment land as shown on the policies map, is proposed at:**

**Extension to Manor Trading Estate – 3.7 ha**

**Extension to Charfleets Industrial Estate – 10.5 ha**

**South of Northwick Road – 9.7 ha**

- 1. With regards to the extension to Manor Trading Estate, the site is an extension to the east of Manor Trading Estate will be made available for employment development falling within Use Classes B1b, B1c and B2 of the Use Classes Order where it can be demonstrated that:**
  - a. Access suitable for commercial vehicles has been secured for the extension to the site via the adjacent industrial estate and that appropriate highways improvements are made to the estate roads and junction to accommodate the increased commercial traffic;**
  - b. Sufficient and suitable provision has been made for the loss of habitat in order to result in an environmental net gain; and**
  - c. Sustainable drainage measures will be implemented to ensure no increase in the risk of surface water flooding to the site or nearby properties.**
- 2. The Extension to Charfleets Industrial Estate to the south of Charfleets Industrial Estate will be made available for employment development falling within Use Classes B1b, B1c and B2 of the Use Classes Order, where it can be demonstrated that:**
  - a. Access suitable for commercial vehicles has been secured for the site via Roscommon Way;**
  - b. Sufficient and suitable compensatory provision has been made for the loss of wildlife in order to result in a net gain in biodiversity;**

- c. Development proposals are resilient and resistant to flooding from tidal and surface water sources, and provide safe, on-site refuge facilities in the event that a flood does occur;
  - d. Sustainable drainage measures will be implemented to ensure no increase in the risk of surface water flooding to the site or nearby properties; and
  - e. Drainage capacity will be improved as necessary to accommodate additional foul water flows.
- 3. Land to South of Northwick Road, the site will be made available for employment development falling within the B Use Classes of the Use Classes Order where it can be demonstrated that:
  - a. An enterprise centre or similar facility will be delivered on the site, providing accommodation for start-up businesses;
  - b. Development proposals will ensure that there is no adverse harm to the Canvey Wick SSSI, and that any biodiversity loss on site is fully mitigated or compensated for, with the result in an environmental net gain;
  - c. Development proposals are resilient and resistant to flooding from tidal and surface water sources, and provide safe, on-site refuge facilities in the event that a flood does occur;
  - d. Sustainable drainage measures will be implemented to ensure no increase in the risk of surface water flooding to the site or nearby properties;
  - e. Drainage capacity will be improved as necessary to accommodate additional foul water flows; and
  - f. Development proposals are designed to reflect the prominent location of the site as the gateway to West Canvey.

## **Canvey Seafront Entertainment Area**

### **Policy Context**

**11.29** There are no specific policies in the *NPPF* with regard to the role of tourism in the non-rural local economy. However, the Government's *Tourism Strategy 2011* highlights the importance of tourism to the economy and is clear that good planning policies can support growth in the tourism sector.