



Place and Policy
Castle Point Borough Council
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Mr Phillip Lewis
c/o Andrea Copsey

1st September 2021

Mr Lewis,

INSPECTOR LED CONSULTATION – CASTLE POINT BOROUGH COUNCIL’S COMMENTS ON MATTERS ARISING FROM REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

I refer to the consultation you undertook from the 9th August – 31st August 2021 on the implications for the submitted Castle Point Local Plan of the proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the additional materials uploaded to the evidence base since the hearings commenced in May 2021.

Representations were submitted by 53 individuals or organisations during the consultation period on these matters. You have provided the Council with a brief opportunity to review and comment on those representations, and the purpose of this letter is to set out the Council’s comments on those matters arising.

General Comment

A good number of the representations received commented on the principles of development as set out in the Local Plan. These matters were addressed thoroughly through the Council’s Hearing Statements as follows:

- [Matter 1](#) in relation to Sustainability Appraisal and Climate Change
- [Matter 2](#) in relation to the North West Thundersley area (also referred to as the Blinking Owl site)
- [Matter 3](#) in relation to Green Belt
- [Matter 4](#) in relation to Housing need and supply
- Matter 5 in relation to the appropriateness of identified housing allocations ([Benfleet](#), [Canvey Island](#), [Hadleigh](#), [Thundersley](#))
- Matter 7 in relation to development control matters such as [sustainable transport](#) and [biodiversity net gain](#)

These matters were all discussed in depth through the examination hearing sessions and the Council believes that the principles of development as set out in the submitted Local Plan are sound and consistent with the NPPF, as amended.

Local Wildlife Sites

It is noted that there are various representations related to the additional documents [EXM-054](#) and [EQ-018](#) regarding Local Wildlife Sites. The Council remains of the view that those Local Wildlife Sites identified on the Polices Map and listed in Appendix 4 of the submitted Local Plan should be protected in accordance

with policy NE4, as amended. It is considered that this is consistent with paragraph 179 of the NPPF, and in line with the emerging requirements of the Environment Bill which include the creation of Local Recovery Networks and mandates biodiversity net gain.

The Council is aware that those amendments to Local Wildlife Site boundaries proposed in 2019 have not been endorsed by the Essex Wildlife Site Partnership as that partnership is not currently operational. However, in response to emerging requirements from the Environment Bill, a Local Nature Partnership is being established in Essex which will amongst other matters take on the role of endorsing Local Wildlife Sites. There will be scope in due course for the amendments proposed in 2019 to be endorsed.

It is therefore critical that the schedule of sites set out in Appendix 4 is maintained. Alternatively, if the Inspector is unable to find that approach sound, the Council would consider an amendment to policy NE4 which would allow any amendments to Local Wildlife Site designations endorsed after the plan is adopted to be subject to the requirements of policy NE4 from the point of endorsement onwards.

Protection of Trees

In the representation from the MP Rebecca Harris, the issue of the protection of existing trees is raised.

It is noted that in the Council's letter to you regarding the amendments to the NPPF ([CPBC/04](#)), we refer you to policy DS2 in relation to the newly inserted paragraph 131 which introduces new requirements for trees. Additionally, the Council should also have referred you to policy NE6 entitled Protecting and Enhancing the Landscape and Landscape Features. This policy is concerned with the protection of existing landscape features including trees and hedgerows and addresses the requirements of paragraph 131 of the NPPF, as well as the concerns of the MP in this regard.

Flood Risk

Several of the representations received commented on the amendment to the NPPF requiring Council's to have considered flood risk arising from all sources. The Council has been aware of the different sources of flood risk affecting different parts of the Borough throughout the preparation of the Local Plan.

The preparation of the Local Plan has been informed by the South Essex Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level One ([CC-009](#)), the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level Two ([CC-010](#)), and the South Essex Surface Water Management Plan ([CC-016](#)).

The Sequential and Exceptions Test for Housing Site Options 2020 ([CC-014](#)), which reviewed an earlier 2018 version, considered the sequential approach to flood risk not only considering tidal and fluvial flood risk but also having regard to surface water and ground water flood risk.

The Council therefore believes that it was proactive in its approach to assessing flood risk by considering all sources from an early stage and going beyond the requirements of the NPPF as set out prior to the most recent amendments. This means that the work undertaken previously is now consistent with the requirements of the NPPF.

Coastal Communities Initiative Canvey Economic Plan 2017 ([EXM-049](#))

This document did not form part of the evidence base for the Local Plan and was added to the evidence base at the request of the Canvey Green Belt Campaign. It is an economic plan for Canvey Island focused on key regeneration and economic development activities that could be undertaken to revitalise the economy on Canvey Island.

The Canvey Green Belt Campaign has suggested that the Local Plan has failed to implement the town centre component of this plan, and consequently missed out on brownfield development opportunities.

The deliverable outcomes of the Economic Plan are set out at pages 30 to 32 of the plan and are largely focused in respect of the town centre on public realm enhancements, community safety improvements, the reduction of vacant shops and the establishment of a market. It does not provide a blueprint for brownfield development.

In terms of delivery of the Economic Plan, work remains underway on the public realm elements. The Council has acquired the Knightswick Shopping Centre to help facilitate this. Separately, a weekly market has been established, and vacancy rates within the town centre are below average. Information on occupancy and vacancy is set out in the Retail and Leisure Study 2017. The Town Centre Primary Shopping Frontages and Local Shopping Parades Survey September 2019 confirmed these low vacancy rates. It is therefore being delivered.

In terms of taking the opportunity to secure brownfield development within Canvey Town Centre through the Local Plan, this has not been missed.

- Allocations HO27 – Walsingham House; HO29 – Haron Close; and HO30 – Haystack Car Park are sites on the edge of Canvey Town Centre.
- Extant consents exist for 125-127 High Street, Canvey, and 92-94 Foksville Road, Canvey. These are both redevelopment sites within Canvey Town Centre that are under construction.
- Policy TC2 seeks the regeneration of Canvey Town Centre with the aim of providing an enhanced retail offer alongside a mix of other business, community, residential and open spaces.
- Existing restrictions on the use of ground floor spaces in shopping areas in the town centres are not carried forward into the submitted Local Plan from the 1998 Adopted Local Plan, providing greater flexibility in uses in these locations.

[Access to Canvey Study 2017 \(TPC-016\)](#)

A query was raised in respect of this study by the Canvey Green Belt Campaign regarding the assumptions it made in respect of growth. The study uses 2015 data to create a base scenario for 2016. It then used industry standard TEMPro growth assumptions to create a scenario for 2033. It has therefore factored in growth in relation to traffic movements from 2016 – 2033.

[Sports England Playing Pitch Calculator – Football Pitches \(EXM-050\)](#)

In their representation Persimmon Homes and Redrow Homes have indicated a concern that the costs set out in EXM-050 - Sports England Playing Pitch Calculator – Football Pitches are additional costs that have not been considered in the viability assessment.

The Infrastructure Delivery Plan ([DV-006](#)) however used the Sports England Calculators to derive the costs for sports facilities as set out at table 25 and accumulated in the tables for each site at appendix 3. The cumulative infrastructure cost for each site arising from the Infrastructure Delivery Plan informed the costs for infrastructure in the Viability Assessment 2020 ([DV-005](#)). This cost has therefore been considered in the viability assessment.

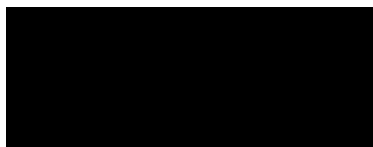
The playing pitch element drawn out in EXM-050 is but a component of the Sport Facilities costs, and was provided to indicate how the contributions could be attributed to the Football Associations Football Plan for Castle Point which seeks to create sustainable football hubs across the borough.

[Viability Addendum for Sites HO11 and HO31 \(DV-009\)](#)

Representations have been received questioning the validity of the additional viability work for sites HO11 and HO31. It should be noted that this work was prepared as an addendum to the Castle Point Local Plan and CIL Viability Study 2020 ([DV-005](#)), and should be read alongside that document.

I trust that these comments assist you in your deliberations regarding the Castle Point Local Plan, and I look forward to receiving your post-hearings letter in due course.

Yours sincerely,



Ian Butt

Head of Place and Policy