



CASTLE POINT BOROUGH COUNCIL

LOCAL PLAN

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WRITTEN STATEMENT

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Design

3.5. The design of the built environment, its buildings, open spaces and features has a direct impact on all those who live or work in urban areas. In a relatively densely urbanised area such as Castle Point, it is particularly important to ensure that a high quality of design is achieved in order to maintain an environment that is not only visually attractive, but which retains a sense of place and identity and which promotes comfort and ease of use.

3.6. The design of new development should be compatible with the form of existing buildings and the character of the area in which it is to be sited, both in terms of external design and materials. Additionally, the design of spaces between and around buildings may be equally as important to the townscape as the design of buildings themselves. Hard and soft landscaping schemes should therefore be considered an integral part of any proposal for development and will be subject to the specific approval of the Council. New development should also take account of the need to secure ease and safety of movement and access for all users.

POLICY EC2 - DESIGN

A HIGH STANDARD OF DESIGN IN RELATION TO NEW BUILDINGS AND EXTENSIONS AND ALTERATIONS TO EXISTING BUILDINGS WILL BE EXPECTED THROUGHOUT THE BOROUGH. IN PARTICULAR, WHEN CONSIDERING DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS THE COUNCIL WILL HAVE REGARD TO THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:

- i. THE SCALE, DENSITY, SITING, DESIGN, LAYOUT AND EXTERNAL MATERIALS OF ANY DEVELOPMENT, WHICH SHALL BE APPROPRIATE TO ITS SETTING AND WHICH SHOULD NOT HARM THE CHARACTER OF ITS SURROUNDINGS;
- ii. THE APPEARANCE AND TREATMENT OF SPACES AROUND BUILDINGS WHICH SHALL BE ENHANCED BY APPROPRIATE HARD AND SOFT LANDSCAPING;
- iii. THE NEED TO ENSURE THAT ALL MODES OF MOVEMENT ARE MADE SAFE AND CONVENIENT.

Residential Amenity

3.7. The effect of development on residential amenity is an important planning consideration. Uses which can cause particular conflict with residential amenity, by virtue of traffic generation, noise, fumes or other forms of disturbance, include industrial and commercial development, hot food establishments, shops and recreational uses. The need to consider the impact of such development is especially important given policies in the plan which facilitate the operation of non-residential uses in close proximity to residential uses.

3.8. Whilst the Local Plan contains a number of policies concerned with the protection of residential amenity in specific circumstances, such as **Policies ED8, H9 and H14 and SPG 5, 6 and 7**, there are likely to be circumstances where the effect of a development upon residential amenity is not subject to any other specific policy in the Plan. In such circumstances the Council will apply the following policy:

POLICY EC3 - RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS WHICH WOULD HAVE A SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE EFFECT UPON THE RESIDENTIAL AMENITY OF THE SURROUNDING AREA BY REASON OF TRAFFIC, NOISE, FUMES OR OTHER FORMS OF DISTURBANCE WILL BE REFUSED.

3.9. It is possible to negate some of the nuisances of new development by means of planning conditions or agreements, and in appropriate cases the Council will seek to impose conditions on matters such as hours of operation,

Pollution

3.10. The planning system has an important role to play in protecting the environment, local residents, businesses and the public in general from all forms of development that could give rise to pollution.

3.11. Pollution can take a number of forms. As well as airborne emissions, discharges into watercourses, rivers and streams, and the pollution of the land, disturbance from noise, dust, vibration, light and heat are all forms of pollution that can have a damaging effect on the environment and the public's enjoyment of it.

3.12. The Council will seek to control all forms of development that could result in an adverse effect on health, the environment and general amenity through the implementation of the following policy:

POLICY EC4 POLLUTION

DEVELOPMENT WHICH WOULD HAVE A SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE EFFECT ON HEALTH, THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT, OR GENERAL AMENITY BY REASON OF RELEASES OF POLLUTANTS TO WATER, LAND OR AIR, OR BY REASON OF NOISE, DUST, VIBRATION, LIGHT OR HEAT, WILL BE REFUSED.

Protection of Wildlife and their Habitats

3.29. As well as statutorily defined sites, Castle Point contains a number of additional important wildlife habitats, both within the urban areas and the surrounding countryside. Many of these habitats have been identified by the Essex Wildlife Trust and have been included in a schedule of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation , (SINC's, See **Appendix 6**).Where development proposals fall within defined SINC's or might otherwise have a significant adverse effect on the interests of wildlife, particularly those species of flora and fauna protected under Part 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981, and its subsequent amendments, the Council will take account of representations made by the appropriate wildlife and conservation bodies and will apply the following policy:

<p>POLICY EC13 - PROTECTION OF WILDLIFE AND THEIR HABITATS THE COUNCIL WILL REFUSE DEVELOPMENT WHICH IS PREJUDICIAL TO THE INTERESTS OF ALL WILDLIFE AND THE RETENTION AND MANAGEMENT OF IMPORTANT HABITATS</p>
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3.30. Where a development scheme likely to have a significant adverse impact on wildlife interests is exceptionally permitted, the Council will require by condition that important habitats are protected on site.

Creation of New Wildlife Habitats

3.31. The Essex Structure Plan encourages proposals for the creation of new nature reserves as well as the protection of existing reserves. Currently, the Borough contains one statutory Local Nature Reserve at Great Wood, (managed by Southend-on-Sea Borough Council), and a further non-statutory reserve at Pound Wood, (managed by the Essex Wildlife Trust). The Council will encourage proposals for further nature reserves in appropriate locations. It will also promote the creation of new wildlife habitats within new developments wherever possible, particularly where these adjoin existing important sites for nature conservation where wildlife could be disturbed by the encroachment of the built environment.

POLICY EC14 - CREATION OF NEW WILDLIFE HABITATS

THE COUNCIL WILL ENCOURAGE PROPOSALS FOR FURTHER NATURE RESERVES. IT WILL ALSO PROMOTE THE CREATION OF NEW WILDLIFE HABITATS IN CONJUNCTION WITH DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS. IN CONSIDERING PLANNING APPLICATIONS, THE COUNCIL WILL TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE POTENTIAL FOR THE CREATION OF WILDLIFE HABITATS, PARTICULARLY WHERE THESE WOULD ENHANCE AND COMPLEMENT EXISTING ELEMENTS OF NATURE CONSERVATION ON ADJOINING LAND.

Trees and Woodlands

3.47. The Borough contains a number of large ancient woodlands (See **Appendix 8**), along with substantial areas of recent secondary woodland which are important not only in terms of their nature conservation value but also in terms of their visual and recreational amenity. Individual trees are also important visual elements of the landscape generally, but numbers have declined in recent years. In order to prevent further losses, the Council will encourage the appropriate management of woodland areas, and will support the Essex Wildlife Trust in their efforts to acquire and manage ancient woodlands in the Borough

3.48. The Council will also continue to protect specific trees and areas of woodland through the use of Tree Preservation Orders and where appropriate will require existing trees, hedgerows and woods to be retained and protected in all development schemes.

POLICY EC22 - RETENTION OF TREES, WOODLAND AND HEDGEROWS.

IN SCHEMES FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT, EXISTING TREES, HEDGEROWS AND WOODS SHALL BE RETAINED WHEREVER POSSIBLE. WHERE DEVELOPMENT TAKES PLACE, LOSS OF EXISTING TREE COVER AND HEDGEROWS SHALL BE KEPT TO A MINIMUM. ALL TREES AND SHRUBS TO BE RETAINED AFTER DEVELOPMENT SHALL BE SUITABLY PROTECTED THROUGHOUT THE DURATION OF CONSTRUCTION.

3.49. The retention of existing landscape features must be complemented by the provision of sympathetic new features in areas of damaged landscape. Indigenous trees and shrubs should be used to support wildlife and maintain the traditional character of the countryside. Planting in field corners and along streams, the screening of prominent buildings and the retention and enhancement of hedges and copses will form part of this approach.

3.50. Detailed landscaping schemes should be an integral part of all new development proposals and will continue to be the subject of specific approval by the Council.

Density of Development

4.36. Because there is a practical limit to the supply of land and a need to protect the Green Belt from development, it is important that the best use is made of land identified as available or suitable for housebuilding. To achieve this, the density of new development should be the highest compatible with the creation of a high quality, built environment, a high standard of residential amenity and a balanced community, whilst not damaging the character of established residential areas.

POLICY H9 - NEW HOUSING DENSITIES

THE OPTIMUM DENSITY FOR ANY SITE WILL BE THE NUMBER OF DWELLINGS CAPABLE OF BEING ACCOMMODATED WHILST ENSURING THAT:-

- (i) THE DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT BE HARMFUL TO THE CHARACTER OF THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS INCLUDING ANY NATURAL FEATURES AND ATTRIBUTES;
- (ii) THE LAYOUT IS BOTH FUNCTIONAL AND ATTRACTIVE WITH ADEQUATE BUILDING LINES, LANDSCAPING, SETTING FOR THE BUILDING, AND SPACE AROUND THE BUILDINGS; (Contd).
- (iii) THE DEVELOPMENT ACCORDS WITH ALL OF THE APPROPRIATE POLICIES CONTAINED IN THE LOCAL PLAN.

PROPOSALS WHICH DO NOT ACHIEVE THESE CRITERIA WILL BE REFUSED.

The Mix of Development

4.37. In the period 1981 to 1991, the number of one person households in the Borough rose from 16.1% of all households to 20.3%. In the same period the number of two person households rose from 32.5% to 34.6%. Over 55% of all households in the Borough may therefore be classified as small. It is anticipated that in the future this proportion will rise still further, primarily as a result of the growth in one person households. A growing demand for small dwellings may therefore be anticipated.

4.38. Despite the high proportion of small households, smaller dwellings accommodate only 11.2% of households. There would therefore appear to be a mismatch between household and dwelling size.

4.39. In order to provide an opportunity for this mismatch to be remedied, the Council will encourage all proposals for residential development to provide an appropriate range of dwelling type to meet the full range of housing needs.

POLICY H10 - MIX OF DEVELOPMENT

IN ALL PROPOSALS FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT, THE COUNCIL WILL EXPECT THE PROVISION OF AN APPROPRIATE RANGE OF DWELLING TYPES IN ORDER TO SATISFY A VARIETY OF HOUSING REQUIREMENTS.

Car Parking

Car Parking Standards

7.17. With likely increasing car ownership during the Plan period it will become especially important that adequate off-street parking provision accompanies any future development proposals, in accordance with recognised standards. The guidelines adopted by the Borough Council for car parking are set out in **Appendix 4**, and in general reflect the standards recommended by the County Council for application throughout Essex.

POLICY T8 - CAR PARKING STANDARDS

THE COUNCIL WILL APPLY, WITH SPECIFIED EXCEPTIONS¹, THE REVISED STANDARDS FOR CAR PARKING IN ESSEX, PUBLISHED BY THE ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL.

7.18. ¹The 'specified exceptions' referred to in this policy are a set of parking policies specific to Castle Point and are referred to at **SPG20** to **SPG26**, and **Appendix 12**.

Provision of Children's Playspace

8.17. An assessment of children's playspace in the Borough revealed deficiencies in provision in St. George's, Victoria, St. James, Central and North Wards.

8.18. The existence of safe play areas within easy reach of people's homes is important for the healthy development of children and the following policy seeks to encourage the provision of such facilities.

POLICY RE4 - PROVISION OF CHILDREN'S PLAYSPACE AND PARKS

THE COUNCIL WILL SEEK TO PROVIDE AND FACILITATE THE PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL CHILDREN'S PLAYSPACE AND PARKS IN AREAS OF IDENTIFIED NEED. WHERE POSSIBLE AND APPROPRIATE, SUCH PROVISION SHALL BE MADE IN ASSOCIATION WITH NEW DEVELOPMENT.

8.19. Where appropriate, play areas should be landscaped and adequately served with seating, lighting and toilet facilities.

The Needs Arising From New Development

Social and Physical Infrastructure

9.2. Where the infrastructure requirements generated by development cannot be met by existing provisions, the Council will require developers to make provision for essential social and physical infrastructure to serve the needs of the proposed development. Social provision could include land for new facilities, or the provision, or contributions to the provision, or extension, of buildings for community uses such as community centres, emergency and health service facilities and recreational facilities in addition to the provision of education facilities. Physical infrastructure provision could include roads, drainage and water supply.

9.3. General requirements for educational facilities will be determined in the light of the provisions of the Report of the Working Party of the Essex Planning Officers Association on the provision of school sites.

9.4. In order to secure the provision of adequate infrastructure, the Council will, in appropriate cases, seek to enter into Agreements under Section 106, or impose conditions under Section 72 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

POLICY CF1 - SOCIAL AND PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND NEW DEVELOPMENTS

WHERE THE INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS GENERATED BY DEVELOPMENT CANNOT BE MET BY THE EXISTING PROVISION THE COUNCIL WILL REQUIRE DEVELOPERS TO PROVIDE, PRIOR TO THE OCCUPATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT APPROVED:

(i) APPROPRIATE HIGHWAY AND DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS; AND

(ii) APPROPRIATE IMPROVEMENTS TO SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE TO SERVE THE NEEDS OF THE NEW DEVELOPMENT.

Surface Water Disposal

9.34. Development of open land can exacerbate or create problems of surcharge in existing watercourses by increasing surface water run-off. Large scale development will require the provision of balancing ponds or other improvements to the drainage system in order to ameliorate such difficulties.

9.35. In considering any proposal for development likely to have implications for land drainage, the Council will have regard to the National Rivers Authority 1994, "*Guidance Notes for Local Plan Authorities on the Methods of Protecting the Water Environment through Development Plans*", a copy of which is available for inspection, and will liaise with the Environment Agency and Anglian Water Services to secure appropriate land drainage provision.

POLICY CF14 - SURFACE WATER DISPOSAL

IN ALL CASES WHERE DEVELOPMENT WOULD RESULT IN SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASED SURFACE WATER RUN-OFF, THE COUNCIL WILL REQUIRE APPROPRIATE IMPROVEMENTS TO WATERCOURSE CAPACITY TO BE UNDERTAKEN BEFORE DEVELOPMENT COMMENCES.