

Chapter One	Introduction
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Introduction

- 1.1. Castle Point is unique in geographical terms, being comprised of two distinct areas, the Mainland to the north, on which the major settlements of Hadleigh, South Benfleet, Thundersley and New Thundersley are located and Canvey Island to the south.
- 1.2. The northern boundary of the Borough is defined by the A127, Arterial Road, whilst the western boundary is defined by the A130. To the east, the urban areas of Castle Point are largely separated from the urban areas of Southend-on-Sea by the open areas of the Hadleigh Castle Country Park and Belfairs Wood. The Borough is located on the Southend to Fenchurch Street Railway line
- 1.3. The Borough has grown rapidly in population, rising from some 31,000 in 1951 to over 86,000 in 1991. With this growth in population has come significant pressure for development, which has created a densely urbanised area, dominated by residential development. Despite its heavily urbanised nature, the Borough retains large areas of woodland, open land and Green Belt many of which have significant nature conservation and landscape value. The Borough has five Sites of Special Scientific Interest the largest of which lies within the Hadleigh Downs. This area has also been designated as a Wetland of International Importance (Ramsar Site) and is a Special Protection Area, designated under the European Community Wild Birds Directive
- 1.4. Hadleigh Downs and the area around the Benfleet Creek also provides one of the most striking landscape features of the Borough.
- 1.5. The Borough has five main shopping areas, located at the Rayleigh Weir Trading Estate and within the town centres of Canvey Island, South Benfleet, Hadleigh and Tarpots and major employment areas at Rayleigh Weir, Manor Trading Estate and Charfleets Industrial Estate.

The Need For A Plan

- 1.6. The Borough is the subject of great pressure for development. In order to protect and enhance the character of the Borough and to achieve a balance between appropriate development opportunities and the protection and enhancement of the built and natural environment, the process of development needs to be controlled and guided. The Local Plan sets out the policies for achieving this.
- 1.7. All proposals for development are determined by the Local Planning Authority, having regard to the Development Plan and "any other material considerations" such as Government Policy Guidance Notes, Circulars and Statements. The Development Plan for Castle Point is currently comprised of the Adopted Local Plan and the Approved Structure Plan which was approved and adopted by the Essex County Council. The Local Plan translates the strategic policies of the Structure Plan into locally applicable policies and proposals.
- 1.8. The Local Plan will provide the basis for development control to 2001. It will also consider post 2001 requirements, particularly in terms of housing and industry and the Green Belt boundary.

Relationship With The Structure Plan

1.9. In preparing this Local Plan, the Borough Council has had regard to the requirements of the Approved Essex Structure Plan (Second Alteration). For south-east Essex these requirements may be summarised as follows:-

- ☐ To cater for the County's own housing needs and meet some regional demand. To restrict housing development to the implementation of existing commitments. To reduce gradually the rate of housebuilding.
- ☐ To encourage economic growth, the expansion of existing employment and the introduction of new employment in order to improve the balance between workers and jobs.
- ☐ To concentrate development in towns and tightly contain villages, but allow sufficient growth in appropriate villages to help maintain rural community life.
- ☐ To maintain the Metropolitan Green Belt
- ☐ To make the best use of the County's natural resources, by preserving high grade agricultural land safeguarding wildlife reserves and areas of valued landscape and concentrating recreational development where there is least impact on other resources.
- ☐ To keep town centres as the urban focus and adapt them to meet future shopping demands.
- ☐ To maintain and make the best use of existing transport systems by developing a hierarchy of roads; maintaining a basic level of public transport; increasing the use of traffic management and carefully locating new development.
- ☐ To keep future development to a level which is technically and financially feasible and
- ☐ To co-ordinate the provision of services with development.

1.10. In addition to these strategic statements, the Structure Plan also states that on Canvey Island, further oil-related industry cannot be satisfactorily accommodated.

1.11. The Structure Plan cannot define precisely where new development is to take place within the County because it is not site specific. A local plan is therefore needed to make specific land allocations to give a detailed local effect to the proposals of the Structure Plan.

1.12. The Council's former Development Plan is now over twenty years old and changes have occurred since its approval. A new statement of the Council's policies and proposals for the promotion and control of development is required. This Plan provides such a statement.

1.13. The Approved Essex Structure Plan, Second Alteration is to be reviewed in the near future which will provide strategic planning guidance for the period to 2011. The guidance of this document will be incorporated into the review of the Local Plan.

Relationship To Local Plans In Adjoining Local Authorities

1.14. Rochford District Council adopted the First Alteration of its District-wide Local Plan in 1995. Southend Borough Council adopted its Boroughwide Plan "towards 2001" on the 1st March 1994 and Thurrock Borough Council adopted its Local Plan in September, 1997. Basildon District Council adopted its Local Plan in March, 1998. All of these plans cover the period to 2001.

- 1.15. The provisions of these documents have been taken into account in the formulation of this Local Plan.
- 1.16. With the adoption of the Castle Point Borough Council Local Plan complete Local Plan coverage for South-east Essex has been achieved.

The Process Of Plan Preparation

- 1.17. It had originally been the intention of this Authority to prepare its Local Plan in two parts. Accordingly, in June 1991, the Council published the Castle Point Consultation Draft Local Plan, Part I, which was concerned with the Mainland. Part II of the Plan was to have been concerned with Canvey Island and was to be published in 1992. Due to a change in legislation covering the preparation of Development Plans however, the Council was unable to pursue its original intention and in October 1992 produced a single, Boroughwide Consultation Draft Local Plan. This document reflected the responses received in respect of Part I of the Consultation Draft Local Plan.
- 1.18. Like the earlier document, the Borough-wide Consultation Draft Local Plan was prepared for informal consultation purposes. It aimed to publicise the Council's policies and proposals so that individuals, businesses, local organisations, public bodies and others had an opportunity to comment at the outset on the future planning of the Borough.
- 1.19. Following an extensive consultation period, the responses received in respect of the Consultation Draft were examined in detail, on a topic basis, and reported to the Members of the Local Plan Working Party for consideration. It is primarily from the analysis of these comments that the changes which appeared in the Deposit Draft Local Plan evolved.
- 1.20. The Deposit Draft Local Plan was placed "on deposit" in October, 1994. This was a formal stage of the plan preparation process, which lasted for six weeks, during which time, representations were received in respect of the plan. Everyone who made representations within this six week period was entitled to have these considered by an independent Inspector at a Public Local Inquiry. The Inspector subsequently made a report on the representations and proposed changes to the Deposit Plan. The Borough Council considered this report and published its response, together with its reasons for the adoption or rejection of the Inspector's recommendations. Further consultations were undertaken in respect of proposed modifications and the responses to these modifications were considered prior to the preparation and adoption of the Local Plan. On adoption this document became the statutory Local Plan for the Borough.

Format Of The Plan

- 1.21. The Local Plan is divided into two main parts, the Written Statement and the Proposals Map. The Written Statement consists of a series of policies which the Council will apply when considering applications for planning permission. For ease of reference, policies covering related topics have been grouped together under general chapter headings such as Transport, Economic Development and Conservation and Environment
- 1.22. It should be noted that unless specifically stated otherwise, policies contained in the Written Statement are applicable throughout the Borough. Some policies however do refer only to specific areas of land. In such cases, the Proposals Map is used to define the areas to which these policies apply.

- 1.23. In all appropriate policies, dimensions are based on metric measurements, although the nearest imperial equivalent is also given for guidance purposes.

Main Changes To The Approved Review Development Plan

- 1.24. The main changes which have been made to the provisions of the Approved Review Development Plan are:-

(i) **Allocation of land for residential purposes**

BSC Site, Arterial Road
 North end Asquith Gardens
 Burches Mead
 Land at eastern end of The Chase
 Land at Beresford Gardens
 Land at junction of Shipwrights Drive/Benfleet Road
 Land on north side of Kiln Road
 Land at east end of Boyton Close
 Land on north side of The Birches
 Land on north side of London Road
 Land to the north of Villa Road/West of High Road
 Land at Chestnut Grove
 Land at Haresland Close
 Land south of Wyburn Road
 Land west of Rayleigh Road
 Land west of Hornbeams
 Land west of Castle View School
 Land east of Hilton Road
 Land east of Nevada Road
 Land east of Eastfield Road
 Land north of Stevens Close
 Land north of Maurice Road
 Land west of High Road
 Land at the Point
 Land south of Winterswyk Avenue
 Land north of Eastern Esplanade (4 sites)
 Land at Lovens Close
 Land at Thorpleas
 Land south of Long Road (2 sites)
 Land north of Long Road
 Land at Sydervelt Road
 Land at Holehaven Caravan Site

(ii) **Allocation of land for Green Belt purposes at:-**

Great Common, Thundersley
 Newlands Tip and Kings Holiday Camp
 The Point, Hadleigh Ray and Upper Horse
 South of Northwick Road

(iii) **Allocation of land for Green Lung purposes at:-**

Land to the east of Haven Road.

(iv) **Allocation of land for employment purposes at land:-**

South of Northwick Road
at Shannon Way

(v) **Allocation of land for shopping purposes at land:-**

South of Northwick Road

(vi) **Allocation of land for long-term residential purposes at land at:-**

Thorney Bay Camp
Kings Camp
South of The Chase, East of Wensley Road
Land at Scrub Lane

(vii) **Allocation of land for Public Open Space purposes at land at:-**

Newlands Tip
Woodside Recreation Ground
East of A130, Canvey Way

The Strategy

1.25. Since 1951, the Borough has experienced significant growth in population which has outpaced the provision of jobs, shopping and community facilities and particularly highway infrastructure. This has been identified as a significant problem on Canvey Island.

1.26. These factors have caused particular problems for the Borough, most notably the creation of high levels of unemployment and commuting, the loss of economic activity, high density of development and increasing pressure for development

1.27. In addition to these growth related difficulties, Canvey Island has been the subject of a number of consents for oil and gas related industry which create a potential hazard for the local population.

1.28. An element of the strategy on which the Local Plan is based, is the restriction of land available for residential development and, within the framework created by the limited infrastructure, to secure a better balance of land uses which reflect both the needs of local residents and businesses and the protection of the natural and built environments.

1.29. In order to achieve this balance the Borough Local Plan pursues the following aims:

Green Belt

Aim 1- To seek to include all open land which contributes to the Green Belt function within the Green Belt, whilst making provision for long term needs by the designation of areas of restraint beyond the urban edge, the use of which will be reassessed beyond 2001.

Environment and Conservation

Aim 2 - To conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Borough and protect its flora and fauna and their habitats.

Aim 3- To conserve and enhance the architectural and historic heritage of the Borough.

Housing

Aim 4- To only meet the level of housing provision contained in the Structure Plan up to 2001, on land already allocated for residential purposes or on land which would clearly benefit from historical commitments.

Aim 5- To allocate for residential purposes those sites within established residential areas which have been identified as having a significant adverse impact on local amenities, and to encourage the relocation of such non-conforming uses to more appropriate locations where possible.

Economic Development

Aim 6 - To provide sufficient employment land to meet the Structure Plan requirement and replace land lost to other uses within the Structure Plan period.

Shopping

Aim 7- To encourage the provision of an appropriate range of shopping facilities to meet the needs of the local population.

Transport

Aim 8- To seek to improve the distribution and flow of traffic through and within the Borough by all modes of transport, paying special attention to improving access to and from Canvey Island.

Recreation

Aim 9- To satisfy identified deficiencies through public and private sector co-operation, in a manner which is compatible with other planning and environmental policies.

Community Facilities

Aim 10 - To work with providers and enables to secure the provision of essential community facilities in the interests of the well-being of all groups within the population.

Hazardous Installations

Aim 11 - To restrain the establishment and expansion of hazardous installations in the Borough.

These aims are translated into specific objectives in the relevant chapters of the Plan before being refined into detailed policies and proposals.

Implementation

- 1.30. The Plan is intended to provide a framework for the development and use of land within the Borough. The implementation of the Plan will primarily occur through private sector investment managed by the process of development control which the Council will use to ensure that land is safeguarded and developed only in accordance with the Plan in order to achieve its stated objectives. As such the precise timescale and success of the Plan will be dependant in part on the national economic situation.
- 1.31. The implementation of the Plan will also be dependant on agencies such as Anglian Water, Eastern Electricity, North Thames Gas and British Telecom giving support to the Plan through their investment programmes.
- 1.32. The role of the Borough Council in implementing the Local Plan is thus threefold:
- i. It will use its development control powers to manage future development in accordance with the Plan;
 - ii. The Council as a landowner will seek to make the best use of its own land in accordance with the objectives of the Plan;
 - iii. The Council will seek to encourage and co-ordinate appropriate investment in the interests of achieving the Plan's objectives.

Monitoring

- 1.33. The policies and proposals contained within the Plan have been formulated having regard to the following factors:
- ☐ National policies as expressed through Central Government enactment, circulars and guidance;
 - ☐ Strategic policies formulated at the regional level (by the South East Regional Planning Conference, SERPLAN) or the County level (by Essex County Council);
 - ☐ Statistical information and projections relating to subjects such as population, employment, retailing and land availability;
 - ☐ Locally determined principles based on qualitative assessments of the Borough and its future prospects for economic and environmental improvement.
- 1.34. Any amendment to these factors during the Plan period could have important implications in terms of the policy content and objectives of the Plan. It is important therefore that these factors are monitored so that where necessary amendments to the Plan may be incorporated into any future review. The Borough Council will continue to monitor the effectiveness of the policies contained in the Plan in terms of the achievement of the aims of the Local Plan and the objectives stated at the start of each policy Chapter.

- 1.35. As part of the monitoring process the Council will carry out an Environmental Appraisal of the Plan against which the impact of its policies and proposals can be assessed.