

CASTLE POINT PLAN BOARD

Note of Meeting held on Wednesday 11 September 2024

Present:

Councillors: Gibson, Copsey, Lillis, Mountford, Savage, and Fuller.

Officers in attendance: Gavin Ball (Principal Planning Officer), Maria Hennessy (Senior Planning Policy Officer), Matt Amner (Planning Policy Officer), Neil Gale (Community Engagement Officer), Ian Butt (Director of Place and Communities)

Apologies: Councillors Blackwell and Palmer, Angela Hutchings (Chief Executive), Dominic Chessum (Communications), Amanda Parrott (Assistant Director of Climate and Growth).

AGENDA

1. Meeting Notes of Previous Meetings:

It was noted that there were 7 meeting Notes to be agreed. Following agreement they will be published on the progress page. Comments on any of the Notes must be submitted by Monday, 16th September.

2. Issues & Options Engagement:

Officers reported that the consultation is still open and will end on Monday, 16/09/24. So far Officers have received **about 422 responses**. Officers reported that, from experience, a deluge of responses is generally received in the last week of the consultation exercise. 1,500 responses were received in the last consultation exercise.

Cllr R Lillis asked if emails could be sent out to refresh people about the impending closing date for submitting responses. Officers said that reminder emails were sent on Friday, 6th September 2024 and that Comms are planning to ratchet up social media to remind respondents about the closing date for the submission of responses. **It was agreed to send out an additional email reminding people that the consultation closes on Monday 16th September.**

3. Early consultation feedback

A presentation was given outlining the various Engagement Activities used to ensure effective engagement. These included 16 Resident Workshops, 2 Business Workshops plus Developer Workshops and Stakeholder Workshops, promoted via adverts on the side of 11 buses, telephone kiosk adverts, and roadside adverts across the borough. There have also been a four page spread in Castle Point Together delivered in July, and a post card delivered to all households and a Digital Billboard in Hadleigh. There has also been significant paid and organic advertising via social media and social channels.

The following themes and variations have emerged:

- Lower growth scenarios preferred
- Strong support for protection of Green Belt
- Relative support for development “over there, not here”
- NW Thundersley not unpopular generally
- Infrastructure needs improving
- Concern about traffic

- Campaign against development on the Salvation Army Site

An issue was raised about whether consultees could add further comments after they had submitted their initial response. It was explained that there is no intention to limit consultees making further comments after their initial submission. **It was agreed that additional comments can be submitted to the Council via email or letter.**

Consultation Next Steps

Officers outlined the next steps after the consultation exercise ends at Midnight 16th September 2024, as follows:

- Analysis of responses (already underway)
- Report results to Castle Point Plan Board ASAP
 - General findings
 - Site availability

A Consultation Report will be issued by Reg 19 (Publication of the Draft Plan).

4. NPPF Response

Cllr Gibson acknowledged that a draft response had been received from officers, that he will read the CPBC Report, discuss its content with other councillors and report back to officers any amendments required to sign off the consultation report via Portfolio Holder decision.

NPPF Key Changes:

A brief presentation was given to outline the key changes which underpin the NPPF. These include:

- Mandatory + new + higher housing targets;
- Strengthens cross-boundary co-operation;
- Trials of “brownfield passports”;
- Introduces “grey belt”;
- Changes to how Green Belt is managed;
- Changes to affordable housing tenures in development;
- Increases of fees for planning applications;
- Removal of “beauty” as a design objective;
- Supports large scale infrastructure investments including on-shore wind.

Housing Numbers

It is proposed in the reforms to the NPPF that the housing target arising from the governments standard method is mandatory, not advisory. Furthermore, it is proposed to remove the opportunity for local exceptions to be applied.

It is also proposed that the standard method is changed so that is calculated based on a method of increasing the existing housing stock in an area by 0.8% p.a.

The housing stock calculation is then adjusted by a further 15% for each time the house price to workplace income ratio is above 4. In Castle Point the ratio is 11 x income, so the uplift is around 105% (7 x 15%). This method identifies a housing target for Castle Point of 685 p.a. (13,700 over 20 years).

The challenge this poses to the Castle Point Plan were discussed, with the evidence of local need, the mandate from residents and the risks associated with compliance with national

policy all raised by Members and officers. It was noted that the NPPF consultation is just a consultation at this time and the content of the Final NPPF is not known. The consultation also includes transitional arrangements which the Council can make use of and also comment on.

It was agreed that officers will carry on preparing a draft CPBC Plan with a 255 house p.a. target.

In taking this decision members were advised of the additional costs that may be associated with abortive work, if the plan was to be found unsound due to the change in government policy.

Date of Next CPP Board Meeting

Workshop on Thursday 19th September – content to be agreed.

Next CPP Board Meeting is scheduled for 4pm 16th October 2024.