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Your Ref: Pre-examination checklist
Our Ref: PINS/M1520/429/8
Date: 05 January 2026

Dear Amanda,

Pre-examination checklist for local plans prepared under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

Castle Point Local Plan: matters to address before submission for examination

Thank you for completing the pre-examination checklist which we received on 24 December 2025.

Based on the answers that you provided to the checklist questions and a review of the explanations for some of the answers and relevant parts of documents referred to, I recommend that you address the matters set out in the attached Annex before submitting the Castle Point Local Plan for examination.

Once you have addressed the matters I have identified, I suggest you submit the Plan and other documents under regulation 22 as soon as possible. When you do so, please provide a brief written explanation of what you have done to address each of my recommendations and list any documents you have added or changed.

When you have submitted the Plan and other documents under regulation 22 we will seek to appoint an Inspector (or Inspectors) to conduct the examination in accordance with the timescales set out in the Service Level Agreement.

The completed checklist that we received on 24 December 2025, this letter and Annex, and your written description of the actions taken to address my recommendations should be published on the examination website in due course along with the Plan and other submission and supporting documents.

Please note that this is not an assessment of whether the Plan satisfies all relevant legal requirements and is sound as that will be determined by the examining Inspector(s) who will take account of all the Council's evidence, representations made under regulation 20, and any further information gathered during the examination. It is also possible that the

examining Inspector may have concerns about procedural matters, the scope of the plan, or evidence that I have not identified from the pre-examination checklist.

Yours

William Fieldhouse

Programme Officer

The Council's response to Q1.1 advises that the Council has reached agreement with a suitably experienced Programme Officer who meets the requirements of PINS guidance and that the necessary paperwork is being completed. The Programme Officer should be in post at the time the Plan is submitted for examination [CR1].

Examination website

Further to the Council's response to Q1.3, the examination website should be operational at the time, or shortly after, the Plan is submitted for examination. Although the examination webpage may be hosted on the Council's website, it should appear as an independent webpage solely for the purposes of the examination. The structure and content of the examination website should be agreed with the Programme Officer having regard to Local Plan Examination webpages - Advice for Local Planning Authorities [CR2].

Duty to cooperate and statements of common ground

The Government announced on 27 November 2025 that the duty to cooperate under section 33A of the 2004 Act would be abolished early in 2026 for local plans being prepared under the current system, including those at examination at that point. However, Inspectors are still expected to examine plans in line with NPPF policies on maintaining effective cooperation¹. The four outstanding statements of common ground (with Thurrock, Basildon, Natural England and Essex County Council) referred to in the Council's response to Q2.6 should, therefore, be finalised by the time the Plan is submitted for examination [CR3].

Superseded policies

The Council has not ticked "yes" or "no" in response to Q2.17 but refers to paragraph 1.4 and Appendix B in the Plan. Appendix B seems to list all of the policies in the adopted plan that the Council intends the submitted Plan to supersede. However, some of the adopted policies are not stated to be superseded by a policy in the submitted Plan (eg GB6, GB7 and EC5). The Council should consider whether Appendix B may need to be modified to comply with regulation 8(5) which states that "where a local plan contains a policy that is intended to supersede another policy in the adopted development plan, it must state that fact and identify the superseded policy" [CR4].

¹https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/69286415345e31ab14ecf67d/Local_Plans_letter_to_PINS.pdf

Housing land supply

The Council's response to Q3.5 states that the Plan identifies specific, deliverable sites for five years following the intended date of adoption and refers to policy SP3. Policy SP3 refers to 6,196 homes being delivered between 2026 and 2043 including 1,045 between 2026 and 2031 ("years 1-5").

Footnote 18 in the checklist states that, for the purposes of considering Q3.5, it should be assumed that the plan will be adopted no earlier than one year after the date on which it is submitted for examination, and that the five year period starts on the 1 April following the date of adoption. In other words, if the Plan is submitted before April 2026, the five years following adoption would be from 1 April 2027 (rather than 2026).

The Council's response to Q3.6 states that Plan is supported by up-to-date evidence in accordance with national planning guidance intended to demonstrate that each site that makes up the land supply identified in the plan meets the NPPF definitions of "deliverable" and "developable", along with a trajectory for each site. The response refers to the strategic land availability assessment (July 2025) and Housing Topic Paper (July 2025).

Whether policy SP3 is sound, and whether the housing land supply evidence is up-to-date, proportionate and adequate in the context of national guidance will be matters for the examining Inspector(s). I am not, therefore, recommending any specific actions for the Council to take before submission in relation to those matters. I do recommend, however, that the Council be prepared to respond positively and promptly to any questions that the examining Inspector(s) may have about the housing land supply identified in the Plan and associated evidence [CR5].

Green Belt

The Council's response to Q3.18 states that the Plan includes changes to the Green Belt boundary established in the adopted development plan. The response to Q3.19 refers to "MAGB17 at page 36 of the Green Belt Assessment Appendices", with a hyperlink to that document. "MAGB17" seems to be one 11 hectare site south of Northwick Road and west of Roscommon Way, Canvey Island that is proposed to be added to the Green Belt. The response to Q3.19 does not refer to any other areas of land that the Plan proposes to delete from or add to the established Green Belt. The Council should confirm that the only change to the established Green Belt boundary proposed in the Plan is "MAGB17", or if other changes are proposed (additions and/or deletions, irrespective of size) clearly set out what each of those are [CR6].

Strategic flood risk assessment

The level 2 strategic flood risk assessment should be "signed off" by Essex County Council (the Lead Local Flood Authority) as referred to in the Council's response to Q3.21 by the time the Plan is submitted [CR7].