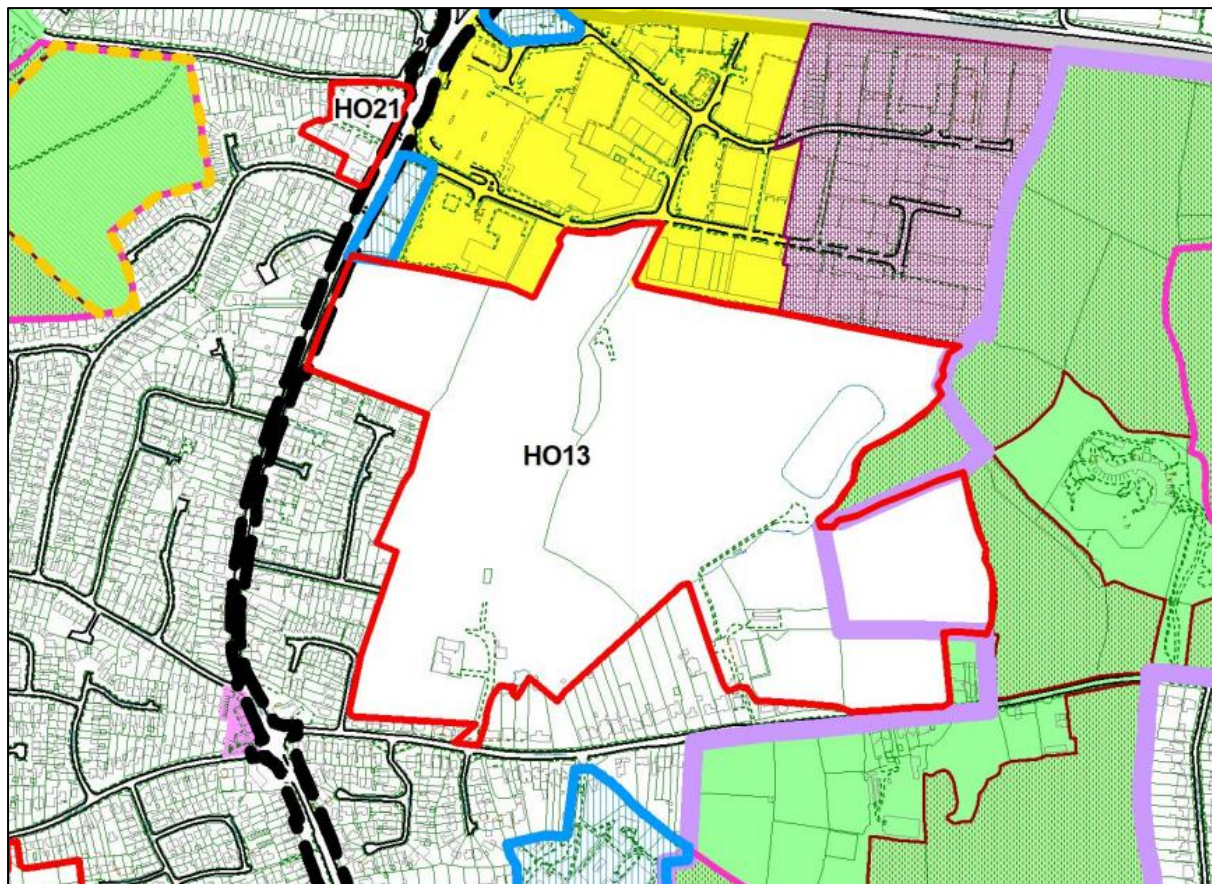


# Statement of Common Ground between Castle Point Borough Council and This Land in respect of Local Plan allocation HO13 – Land East of Rayleigh Road

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Statement of Common Ground is between Castle Point Borough Council (CPBC) and This Land (TL) in respect of site allocation HO13 in the Castle Point Local Plan.

*Figure 1: Map of Landownership at allocation HO13*



(Extract from Pre-Submission version of the Policies Map (2019))

- 1.2 In response to consultation at Regulation 19 on the Castle Point Local Plan, Code Development Planners Limited submitted representations on behalf of TL in respect of allocation HO13 in the Castle Point Local Plan and relevant development management matters. These representations were duly made and were numbered 631 to 653 inclusive.
- 1.3 This Statement of Common Ground has been prepared for the following purposes:
- To set out the shared position of CPBC and TL in respect of allocation HO13.
  - To set out how CPBC and TL are working together to secure the delivery of allocation HO13 in the Castle Point Local Plan 2018 – 2033.

- To identify how issues raised by TL in their representations to the Castle Point Local Plan during the Regulation 19 consultation have been addressed.
- To highlight to the Inspector any outstanding differences between the CPBC and TL about the Local Plan to help focus the examination.

## 2. Allocation HO13

2.1 Allocation HO13 is located within the current extent of the Green Belt to the east of Rayleigh Road. The Green Belt Topic Paper 2018 (GB-003) establishes the exceptional circumstances which exist for releasing land from the Green Belt for the purpose of housing land supply. The Green Belt Review Part Two Update 2019 (GB-004) indicates that harm arising from the release of allocation HO13 for housing purposes would primarily be in respect of the purpose of preventing urban coalescence. TL supports the council's conclusion that sufficient exceptional circumstances exist to justify a review of the green belt as required in paragraph 136 of the NPPF. The allocation of the land east of Rayleigh Road (Policy HO13) demonstrates a proper and robust review of green belt boundaries with due consideration of the need to promote sustainable patterns of development. The site is largely surrounded by existing urban development with easy and short access to existing employment, retail, residential uses and public transport. The assessment is therefore entirely in accordance with the advice contained in paragraph 138 of NPPF and the guidance provided by a series of other green belt reviews detailed in the Green Belt Topic Paper 2018.

TL's own consideration of the contribution under purposes 1 and 2 for the whole of green belt parcel 4 concludes a more moderate contribution to that contained in the Green Belt Topic Paper 2018. Despite the stronger contribution contained in the Topic Paper, TL welcomes and supports the allocation and its justification.

Landscaping requirements are included within Policy HO13 to mitigate landscape harm as recommended in this report. CPBC and TL are therefore satisfied that the Green Belt evidence supports allocation HO13.

2.2 Allocation HO13 has been assessed through the Sustainability Appraisal Process. The allocation corresponds to SHLAA site S0066 (H-007 and H-008). The detailed assessments are included in Annex C of the Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal Environmental Report (SUS-010). The Sustainability Appraisal Modified Environmental Report 2020 (SUS-007) explains the outcomes of the detailed assessments. Table 7 shows the policy off position. Whilst there is limited harm to biodiversity and the natural environment in respect of this allocation, there are some challenges around surface water management. As a Green Belt, greenfield site the allocation also makes a contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt, as considered in paragraph 2.1. However, tables 3 and 4 show that when allocation HO13 is read within the context of the Local Plan and its policy requirements, then the impacts of this allocation on sustainability are positive, with limited negative outcomes. CPBC and TL are therefore satisfied that within the context of the policy requirements of the Local Plan allocation HO13 constitutes a sustainable development proposal.

2.3 It is recognised that the policy requirements of the Local Plan have cost implications. In order to ensure that allocation HO13 is delivered in accordance with those policy requirements, and therefore is sustainable, these cost implications have been reviewed through the Castle Point Local Plan and CIL Viability Study 2020 (DV-005). Table 3.1 of this study identifies where policy requirements of the Local Plan are likely to have cost implications for development. Where significant costs are likely to arise, these are tested in later chapters of the study. Table 6.1

sets out the results of this assessment and shows that under scenario 3, when all the policy requirements of the plan are applied to allocation HO13, it remains deliverable. This remains the case when sensitivity testing is applied as reported in Table 6.3. The specific details of the infrastructure requirements will be defined through the master plan process. The precise infrastructure requirements will depend on the final form of the development.

2.4 Representation 638 submitted by TL in respect of policy HO13 supports the allocation in principle. However, TL sought some clarification in respect of elements of the policy. Elements of the policy where further clarity or amendments is sought are as follows:

- *‘Point 2b of Policy HO13 encourages the use of a mix of design approaches built around the Arcadia, Boulevard and Major Entry Point approaches. TL considers that although these approaches may emerge as entirely appropriate on various parts of the site, it is premature to include these overly prescriptive approaches within the policy unless and until further adequate progress has been made in justifying the approach through the preparation of a master plan. The master plan should be developed in collaboration with the council, Promoters, stakeholders and the community based on careful site-specific analysis of the site and its surrounding context.’*

2.5 Representations seeking clarity in respect of elements of this policy were also sought by the Essex Wildlife Trust (Rep No. 410), Anglian Water (Rep No. 125), Essex County Council (Education and Highways) (Rep No. 361) and the Essex Bridleways Association (Rep No. 275). A series of modifications are therefore proposed to policy HO13 and its supporting text numbered M10.33 to M10.46. These modifications have been subject to screening as part of the Sustainability Appraisal process and it has been concluded that they will not impact negatively on sustainable development in this location (see Sustainability Appraisal Annex D Local Plan Modifications Screening 2020 – SUS-011). Both CPBC and TL support these modifications.

2.6 Work is ongoing in respect of developing transport solutions for this site. However, CPBC, ECC and TL continue to work in partnership to identify and implement the most appropriate detailed highway and transportation solutions.

2.7 In view of the design process yet to take place, TL continue to query reference in Policy HO13 to a particular form of urban design character involving Arcadia, Boulevard and Major Entry Point approaches. The master plan is being developed in collaboration with the council, Promoters, stakeholders and the community based on careful site-specific analysis of the site and its surrounding context. The principle of character areas on site is agreed, however, the Council and TL agree that the specific detail of those character areas and any design led approach should be developed through the preparation of the master plan.

### 3. Delivery of Allocation HO13

3.1 TL has been working constructively in respect of allocation HO13 and has appointed a planning agent to progress the proposals for this allocation.

3.2 TL has met regularly with officers at CPBC since early 2020 to progress proposals for site HO13 from an allocation to delivery. In November 2020, TL met with the Members of the Council’s Local Plan Delivery Board to begin the engagement process for preparing a master plan and concurrent planning application for this site. The timetable being worked to is set out below. Alongside this Statement of Common Ground, a Planning Performance Agreement is to be

agreed between the parties, which commits to this timetable and secures the resource for its delivery:

- 3.3 In advance of the Examination hearing sessions, TL has commenced the public engagement process which will contribute towards the preparation of the masterplan (required by Policy HO13), being prepared in partnership between TL and CPBC in addition to guiding the preparation of the planning application. The public engagement strategy has been developed to ensure that the process is inclusive of the existing community of Thundersley.

#### *Timetable for Delivery of Site HO13*

- 3.4 CPBC and TL consider the broad assumptions made on site capacity and the trajectory included within table 9.1 of the local plan (with modifications at the point of submission) to be realistic and justified. The modifications at the point of submission (M9.11) confirmed the following delivery timetable for the site:

- 2018-2023 – 15 homes
- 2023-2028 – 359 homes
- 2028-2033 – 81 homes

## 4. The Wider Requirements of the Local Plan

### Master Planning

- 4.1 CPBC and TL agree to a partnership approach for the preparation of a site wide master plan, including public engagement with local residents, in addition to other key stakeholders. The Council and TL have started the master plan process ahead of the local plan adoption, having also met with the Council members at the Local Plan Delivery Board and undertaken community engagement on the issues that residents wish the master plan to address. This twin tracking with the local plan examination, ensures that the masterplan reflects the up to date policy requirements for the site, including key infrastructure commitments, a commitment to improving environment quality (where appropriate) and ensuring the development is attractively designed.

### Infrastructure Delivery

- 4.2 CPBC and TL are in agreement on principles of the infrastructure requirements for the site, as outlined within policy HO13 of the local plan and are continuing to work in partnership to firm up the details of the delivery of those infrastructure items and their cost.

### Trajectory

- 4.3 CPBC and TL are in agreement that the trajectory as shown in modification M9.11 is a realistic timetable for delivery of new housing over the plan period.

### Housing Mix

- 4.4 Within representation 636, comments were made about the need to maintain constant monitoring of requirements having regard to the views of developers, relevant market signals and individual site viability assessments. In addition, comments were made regarding additional flexibility to be built into the policy. Responding to this representation, and the representations of other site promoters, the Council commissioned an addendum to the South Essex Strategic Housing Market Assessment in order review the need for housing from the perspective of the sizes and types of homes needed in Castle Point. The *Addendum to the South Essex Strategic Housing Market Assessment for Castle Point 2020* (Reference H-014)



reviewed the evidence using more recent population and household data and identified a need for a broad mix of house types, but with a greater emphasis on family sized housing and also the housing needs of older people than was set out in policy HO3.

- 4.5 This new evidence was used to propose modifications to policy HO3 – modification numbers M9.15 and M9.16. TL note the proposed amendments to the policy and broadly agree with the proposed modifications subject to clarification that SHMA outputs will be applied flexibly subject to up to date evidence.

#### Affordable Housing



- 4.6 CPBC and TL agree that site HO13 will deliver 40% affordable housing on site. The Castle Point Local Plan and CIL Viability Study 2020 (DV-005) confirms under scenario 3, when all the policy requirements of the plan (including affordable housing) are applied to allocation HO13, it remains deliverable. This remains the case when sensitivity testing is applied as reported in Table 6.3.

### 5. Summary

- 5.1 CPBC and TL both agree that allocation HO13 is justified based on the evidence and can deliver housing in a sustainable manner that contributes towards meeting the housing needs of Castle Point Borough. CPBC and TL have been working constructively together to begin the master planning process for this site with the aim of securing delivery on this site from 2023 onwards at a rate of at least 65 homes per annum as set out in the updated housing trajectory.
- 5.2 TL raised a number of matters through their representations to the regulation 19 consultation on the Castle Point Local Plan. These mainly sought clarity, and several modifications to the Local Plan are proposed by CPBC which resolve these concerns. However, any remaining concerns are addressed within TL's relevant matter statements.

In TLs representation concern was raised on the ability to achieve the target delivery rates as set out in the Housing trajectory if the master plan is to be adopted as a supplementary planning document. However, the Council and TL have started the master plan process ahead of the local plan adoption, having also met with the Council members at the Local Plan Delivery Board and undertaken community engagement on the issues that residents wish the master plan to address. This twin tracking with the local plan examination, the agreement to enter into a planning performance agreement and continued engagement with stakeholders, helps to mitigate the risk of any delay.

Signed:

Castle Point Borough Council	CODE Development Planners (on behalf of This Land)
	
Ian Butt	Liam Ryder
Head of Place and Policy	Associate
Date 21 April 2021	Date 6 May 2021