

NOTES OF CASTLE POINT PLAN BOARD

16th May 2024

Present:

Councillors: Gibson (Chair), Blackwell, Fuller, Mountford, Savage, and Palmer.

Officers in attendance: Amanda Parrott (Assistant Director of Climate and Growth), Gavin Ball (Principal Planning Officer), Maria Hennessy (Senior Planning Policy Officer), Matt Amner (Planning Policy Officer).

Consultants in attendance: Hazel Morton (Systra), Adam Hogg (Systra), Neil Darwin (Deyton Bell), Sophie Satchell (Deyton Bell)

Apologies: Ian Butt (Director of Place and Communities), Angela Hutchings (Chief Executive), Neil Gale (Planning Policy Officer – Engagement), Dominic Chessum (Communications).

1. Presentation from Employment Consultants Deyton Bell:

The consultants reviewed around 120 sites with the aim of understanding the potential to deliver new employment floorspace within the Castle Point Plan. Their methodology included site visits along with consultation with local property agents and assessing land registry entries.

Along with the 120 sites, they also analysed the 4 major employment sites across the borough. These major sites were Charfleets on Canvey Island, Rayleigh Weir along the A127, Manor Trading Estate in Benfleet, as well as a potential employment site at the area known as North West of Thundersley.

The consultants also discussed how smaller developable sites within existing town centres create a better offering for mixed use developments than those outside of town centre boundaries. These sites offer sustainable transport options with the potential for offices and other employment spaces underneath residential developments. These mixed-use developments require very little infrastructure in order to be delivered and offer an opportunity to redevelop tired and decaying units.

In terms of North West of Thundersley as a site for mixed use, the Consultants explored how the challenge is securing enough funding for infrastructure and how piecemeal the land ownership is. While the market could exist in the future, and the location off the Rayleigh Spur roundabout would likely be attractive to the market, this would be a very expensive option in terms of providing new infrastructure to deliver the preconditions for investment at this location.

For Manor Trading Estate there is a limited opportunity for increased capacity and a full conversion to residential is an expensive option. However, there is an option to link through to land at North West of Thundersley which could be the first phase of redevelopment on that site.

Stadium Way, Rayleigh Weir is a successful estate with excellent occupancy. There is limited opportunity to increase the existing commercial space. However, there is the potential to

expand into the Rayleigh Weir retail park and develop a new local centre. However, this would be an expensive option.

The final major employment site is Charfleets on Canvey. It is the single most important employment site on Canvey. The consultants stated that the infrastructure at the site needs continued investment, and there is an opportunity to increase the number of commercial units. The biggest opportunity would be to expand the current boundary.

The Consultants closed with the suggestion that there are options about whether Castle Point could become a commuter dormitory or grow its own economy.

Members discussed the potential for Manor Trading Estate to develop upwards and the challenges that could present. Members also discussed the re use of car parking spaces at large scale retail sites and how the offerings at Charfleets could be improved.

2. Presentation from Transport Consultants Systra:

Systra, the council's transport consultants began by exploring both the scope and purpose of the Transport Assessment they are undertaking. Systra have created a transport baseline and an Initial Schedule of Interventions. The interventions were created by looking at existing travel conditions and issues and how interventions could alleviate these issues. The potential development options have been initially assessed with regards how they could potentially deliver some of the interventions.

The evidence base for the Transport Assessment needs to demonstrate compliance with the NPPF key tests. These will ensure that the evidence base is positively prepared, justified, effective and compliant with national policy.

The initial transport baseline covers walking, cycling, public transport and highways.

Members were presented with isochrone maps to display walking and cycling catchments of key town centres and Benfleet station. Members also explored Red Amber Green ratings for junctions and explored which junctions have been identified as having a key significance for the road network.

Members explored the Initial Schedule of Interventions which could be capable of addressing one or more areas of need relating to existing development.

The Initial Schedule of Interventions is a long list of potential transport investments which can be included in the Issues and Options consultation and will be reviewed following feedback.

Members explored the different Initial Schedule of Intervention maps. Bus routes are considered difficult to improve due to current on street issues, such as parking.

Members also explored different options to address other issues relating to transport around the borough in key areas. This included understanding Long Road on Canvey as a corridor scheme and the domino effect of incidents on the transport network of the Island. Options for housing allocations were also tested across the transport work and members explored maps displaying how different options impacted traffic and infrastructure. Furthermore, the key issues surrounding North West of Thundersley are focused around access from Strategic Road Networks, primarily around the Fairglens and Rayleigh Spur Junctions.

3. **AOB:**

The Chair and Board wishes to formally thank former members of the board for their contribution to the work of the Castle Point Plan Board.