

Castle Point Together



Looking ahead to 2026
Find out what changes are coming

New website and CRM
Making it easier to contact the Council

Inside your
winter 2026
issue...

Disabled Facilities
Grants

Pride in Place funding for
Canvey Island

Investment in Richmond
Park and South Benfleet
Playing Fields

Have your say in our
Residents' Survey



Welcome to Castle Point Together

Contact your Council

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Cover Image: Thorney Bay
Pavilion, Charlene Oliver,
Street & Co Coffee Shop



Ambitious plans in progress for 2026

Welcome to the latest edition of Castle Point Together. This issue is packed with updates and information about the work we've been doing and what's coming this year for our Borough.

We're proud to share some of the achievements from 2025, including the opening of the fantastic Thorney Bay Pavilion, which has already become a welcoming space with a thriving café. We also launched a brand-new website, making it easier for residents to access services online and stay informed.

As a Canvey Island resident, I'm pleased to share an update on Pride in Place funding for Canvey Island. In March 2024, the Government



awarded £20 million over the next 10 years to support regeneration and deliver local priorities through a new Neighbourhood Board. This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to make a real difference for Canvey residents.

We're also preparing a residents' survey, giving you the chance to share your views and help shape the future of our Borough. Please do take the opportunity to share your feedback and be in with the chance of winning one of two annual Castle Point Active Leisure Passes giving you free use of the gyms, swimming pools, fitness classes across our two leisure centres.

Cllr Dave Blackwell – Leader

Listening and acting on residents' concerns

This edition highlights some important initiatives that support our residents. You'll find details of our Disabled Facilities Grants, which can be life changing for people with disabilities, enabling them to adapt their homes to live more comfortably and independently. We're committed to ensuring everyone in the Borough has access to the support they need.

We were pleased to be able to turn overnight street lighting back on in Castle Point in October 2025. Initiatives like this show how we're listening to our residents' concerns and acting on them as well as delivering on our administration's pledges.

Looking ahead to 2026, we have exciting plans in motion. We've submitted the Castle Point Plan for examination.

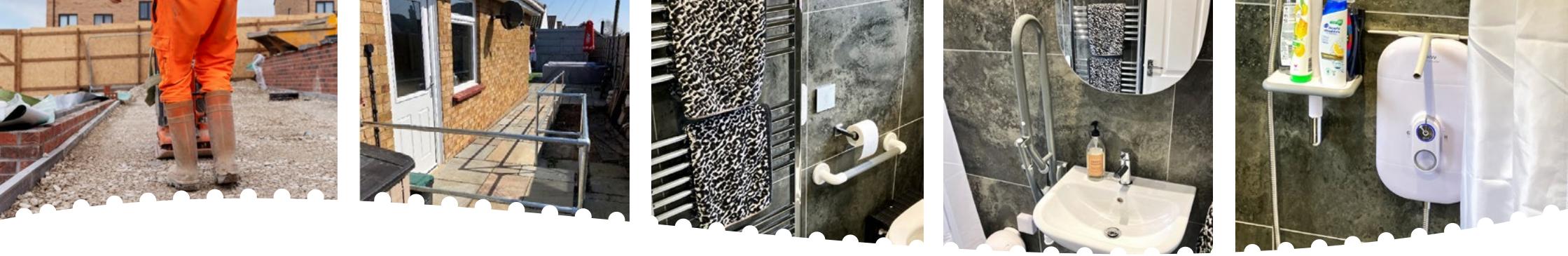


This important document will guide the development of the Borough until 2043 and rules out development on our precious Green Belt. We're also working on improvements to our parks, creating better, more unified spaces. These projects are just a few examples of our ongoing efforts to enhance local facilities and promote wellbeing across the Borough.

Don't miss the useful information in this issue, such as details of our Hardship Fund for residents who may be struggling this winter.

Thank you for taking the time to read this magazine. Your feedback and involvement are vital as we continue working together to make our Borough a fantastic place to live.

Cllr Warren Gibson – Deputy Leader



Creating accessible homes with Disabled Facilities Grants

Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) are government funded grants to help people with disabilities adapt their homes. They help ensure that individuals can live safely, independently and with dignity in their own property. In 2024/5 Castle Point Borough Council issued 89 grants, totalling almost £1 million. Grants can cover a wide range of adaptations, from installing ramps and accessible bathrooms to improving access to gardens and parking areas.

▼ Case study:

The Environmental Health team received a referral for a child with physical disabilities requiring the following adaptations:

- Front and side ramped access to property with a dropped kerb
- Bathroom adaptation to provide showering facilities with a specialist wash/dry toilet

Adaptations made:

▼ Accessible entrance and parking

A new level access front entrance was designed with a graduated block paved surface, seamlessly connecting the doorway to

the roadside. This avoided the need for a concrete ramp and railings, while blending in with the style of the property. The design also incorporated off-street parking for the family's large mobility vehicle, ensuring a safe transfer space between home and the vehicle.

▼ Garden access

Wheelchair access was extended to the rear garden via the kitchen on the side of the property. This adaptation opened up outdoor space for the child, supporting independence and family life beyond the home's interior.

▼ Bathroom adaptation

The existing bathroom, with its bath and standard fixtures, posed significant challenges for the family. Parents were forced to lift their son into the bath, a process that was increasingly unsafe and undignified. To address this, the space was redesigned as an accessible wet room, providing level access showering facilities.

“Not only has it made his life more comfortable it has also given him some independence and has benefited us as a whole family with meeting his everyday needs.

“Our son can now gain entry to our property safely away from the road and he has now also gained a lot of independence.

How to apply

To apply for a DFG, you must contact Essex County Council's Adult Social Care Department on 0345 603 7630. They may arrange for an Occupational Therapist to visit you at your home to assess your needs.

If you need adaptations made to your property, the Occupational Therapist will send a recommendation to Castle Point Borough Council's Environmental Health Service.

For further information, visit: www.castlepoint.gov.uk and search for Disabled Facilities Grants.

Building on success and looking ahead to 2026

Celebrating 2025

The past year has been one of transformation and delivery across Castle Point. Together we've strengthened services, invested in our communities and laid the groundwork for future success. Highlights of the year include:

Community investment

- Refurbishment and reopening of The Paddocks Community Centre, now hosting wellbeing, skills and community events.
- Borough wide CCTV programme secured to improve safety.

Housing and wellbeing

- Major improvements to the Council housing services with a £2.4 million investment to create safer homes, carry out quicker repairs and provide better services.

- Record number of Disabled Facilities Grants issued to help people stay safely in their homes.
- New social housing development at Benderloch Gardens providing two three-bedroom homes.

Environment and climate

- Adoption of a new Waste and Recycling Strategy, including simpler recycling services.
- Solar panels installed at Waterside Leisure Centre.
- Designated Bathing Water application for Canvey seafront submitted to improve local amenities.
- Biodiversity report adopted to protect and enhance our local green spaces.

THE PADDOCKS

Strategic planning and Green Belt

- Continued to defend Green Belt appeals, protecting the Borough's character.
- Draft Castle Point Plan approved for public consultation and submitted to Government for examination in public.

Economy and Culture

- Support for 99 local businesses through the Business Accelerator with eight new start ups launched.
- Shopfront improvement schemes in Hadleigh.
- Approval of the Visitor Economy Action Plan and Climate Action Plan.
- New events programme including fireworks, outdoor festivals and community celebrations.

Community safety and licensing

- Renewal of Public Space Protection Orders in Roscommon Way on Canvey Island to tackle antisocial behaviour.
- New Licensing policies and digital services introduced to make applications easier for residents and businesses.

Major Investments

- Acquisition of Abbeyfield House, Hadleigh for housing, reducing temporary accommodation pressures.
- Major refurbishment of Knightswick Shopping Centre agreed and improvements to Canvey Market.

Overnight street lighting is back

Overnight street lighting has been reinstated across the Borough. Following last year's consultation, residents were clear: **they wanted lights back on.**

Between 27 and 31 October 2025, lights were gradually switched to full overnight operation, keeping streets bright and welcoming. This change came just in time for winter, when longer evenings make lighting especially important.

The consultation drew 3,887 responses, with 83% in favour.

Common reasons included:

- Crime prevention
- Personal safety at night
- Better visibility during emergencies or deliveries

This initiative reflects the Council's commitment to public safety and wellbeing, ensuring Castle Point remains a safe, vibrant community.





Looking ahead to 2026

2025 showed how far we've come in investing in services and communities and in 2026 we'll continue that journey. With strong foundations in place, 2026 will be about delivery and preparing for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). Key projects include:

Community and place

- Launch of Pride in Place projects on Canvey Island.
- Resident survey in February 2026 to shape future priorities.
- Wildlife group to be established to expand land managed for nature.

Housing and wellbeing

- Ambition of moving to C2 rating with the Regulator of Social Housing.
- New social housing developments at Linden Way and Carlton Drive planned to open.
- Delivery of new affordable homes



Economy and culture

- Expansion of recreation and wellbeing programmes with Sport England funding.
- Delivery of the Economic Development Strategy for Castle Point.
- Promotion of Castle Point's visitor attractions through Visit Essex.
- Development of heritage trails and cultural strategy with Arts Council funding.

Environment and climate

- Play space rejuvenation including a new sensory garden.
- Car park strategy and Electric Vehicle (EV) charging rollout.
- New waste collection vehicle workshop opening, with apprenticeships and a greener fleet.



Greener streets and smarter recycling

Big changes are coming for how Castle Point tackles waste and recycling and they're designed to make our streets cleaner, our air fresher, and recycling easier.

Autumn 2026: Recycling gets a refresh

A new disposable sack will be introduced just for paper and card. The familiar pink sacks will still be around, but they'll be reserved for everything else. This change brings us in line with new Government guidelines.

Communal properties join the full recycling suite

Residents in flats and communal housing will join the full range of recycling options. Dedicated bins for plastics, cans, paper, card and food waste will be rolled out, ensuring that everyone has the chance to recycle properly.

Residents' Survey: Have your say

Our Residents' Survey is running from 27 February to 27 March and takes only 10 minutes to complete.

Win a fantastic prize

By taking part, you'll enter a draw to win one of two annual leisure passes, giving you a year of free access to local leisure facilities.

What's it about?

The survey asks for your views on:

- How we communicate with you.
- Accessing Council services online.

- Your opinions on the Council and its services.
- Satisfaction with your local area and town centre.

Why it matters

Your feedback helps shape future decisions and improvements across our community.

Complete the survey and you could enjoy a year of leisure on us!

Visit www.castlepoint.gov.uk/residentsurvey



£20 Million Regeneration Plan for Canvey Island

Canvey Island is set for a major transformation, with a £20 million Regeneration Plan submitted to the Government. The funding, part of the Government's Pride in Place programme, will be invested over the next 10 years to deliver lasting improvements across the Island.

The plan has been shaped by local voices, with schools, youth groups, and community organisations all contributing ideas. Guided by the Canvey Island Neighbourhood Board, it focuses on ten key priorities for investment.

Ten priorities for Canvey's Future

- 1. Better connections** – Improved transport links by road, river, cycle and walking routes.
- 2. Opportunities for young people** – Mentoring, spotting the potential early and youth programmes to achieve aspirations.
- 3. Skills and jobs** – Training and employment programmes to boost skills and employability.
- 4. Youth and community spaces** – New youth facilities and upgraded community hubs for safe, engaging activities.
- 5. Healthier homes** – Support to reduce bills and improve living conditions.
- 6. Seafront and heritage** – Investment in tourism, cultural events and public spaces.
- 7. Canvey Lake and Park** – parkland restoration, safety improvements and promotion as a recreational space with improved accessibility.
- 8. Active lifestyles** – Expanding cycling and physical activities to encourage healthier living.
- 9. Health hub** – A flagship centre providing services across the Island.
- 10. Town centre revitalisation** – High Street restoration, market improvements and shopfront upgrades.



Over 1,000 people took part in engagement events including a pop-up shop at the Knightswick Centre

The Regeneration Plan reflects the voices of Canvey Island residents — from young people imagining their future to community groups shaping priorities.

Over 1,000 people took part in engagement events to help develop the plan. It sets out a bold vision to revitalise the town centre, strengthen the local economy, and celebrate Canvey's heritage.

This investment will deliver better opportunities for vibrant spaces that everyone can be proud of. Together, the community and Council are working with the Neighbourhood Board to ensure these changes bring lasting benefits for generations to come.

£20 million community-led funding!



A unified vision for Richmond Park and South Benfleet Playing Fields

Plans have been unveiled to transform Richmond Park and South Benfleet Playing Fields into a unified, modern, inclusive and welcoming space. The plans will bring both parks under a single identity with improved connectivity between the two parks.

The changes would allow visitors entering from either end to easily access all available amenities, as well as nearby destinations such as shops, schools and the railway station.

Planned enhancements:

- New play areas and an amphitheatre at Richmond Park to support recreation and cultural events.
- A sensory garden developed with Trust Links, offering a calming and inclusive environment.
- Solar powered street lighting across both parks to improve safety and sustainability.



New play areas and recreation spaces are part of the vision

- Accessible playground at South Benfleet Playing Fields, designed for children of all abilities.
- Continued support for existing facilities including bowls, croquet, and the community pavilion.

The Council is now reviewing tenders received for the works to ensure best value and quality. Once contracts are awarded, work will begin to deliver the improvements, with updates provided as the project progresses.

Postal votes for elections

Under the Elections Act 2022, UK voters who applied for a postal vote before 31 October 2023 were required to reapply by 31 January 2026 to keep voting by post.

If you missed this deadline, you'll need to vote in person until you reapply. To reapply online visit www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote.

Calling private landlords with a property to let!

Are you a local landlord looking for a longer term let without management fees?

Have you thought about partnering with us to provide local homes for local people?

If you're interested in finding out more you can express an interest by emailing housingenquiries@castlepoint.gov.uk



Easier garden waste disposal with our brown bin service

Keeping your garden tidy has never been simpler. Castle Point Borough Council offers a weekly brown bin collection service, available to subscribe to all year round.

What you can put in your brown bin:

- Grass cuttings, leaves, weeds, dead flowers.
- Old garden or house plants.
- Windfall fruit and vegetable patch waste (excluding peelings which go with food waste).
- Twigs, hedge trimmings, logs or branches.

Why subscribe?

- No need to keep buying sacks.
- Weekly collections.
- Easier disposal of thorny/twiggy materials and grass cuttings.
- Option to subscribe to multiple bins.

Subscription details

- Subscriptions run 1 April – 31 March, with half price options from October.
- New bins will be delivered within 28 days of subscription.

To sign up visit www.castlepoint.gov.uk/your-collections

Exceptional Hardship Fund

The Exceptional Hardship Fund (EHF) helps people who are suffering financial hardship or who have personal circumstances that impact their ability to pay their council tax.

To qualify for EHF you need to be;

- in receipt of Council Tax Reduction, and;
- able to evidence the issues that are affecting your ability to pay your Council Tax.

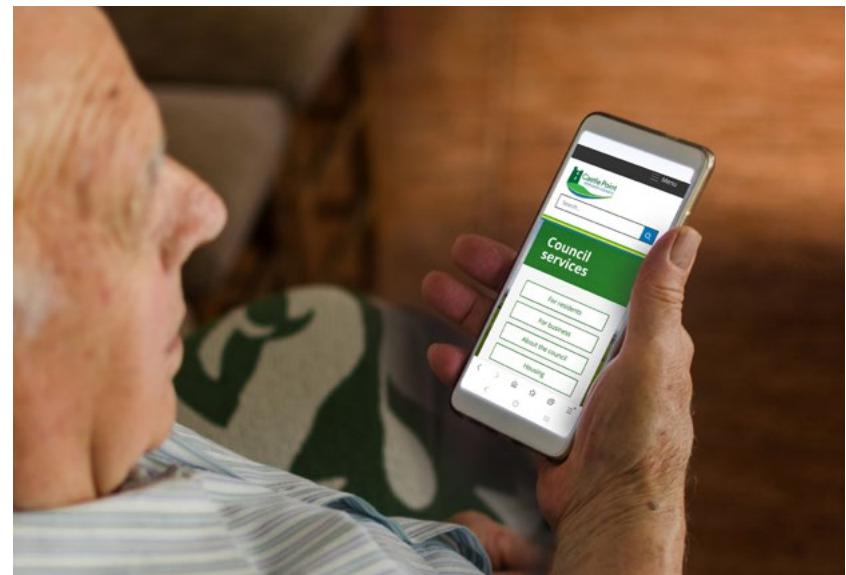
If you wish to apply please visit www.castlepoint.gov.uk/ and search for exceptional hardship fund



A digital upgrade for Castle Point

Residents across Castle Point are now enjoying a digital upgrade, thanks to the launch of the Council's new website and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system which launched in December. This modern technology makes it easier than ever to contact the Council.

From reporting fly tips to letting us know about missed



collections, the new system offers a smoother, more convenient experience, reducing the need for phone calls or in-person visits.

Designed with residents in mind

The new website has a fresh, accessible look that feels familiar but is easier to use. Navigation is simpler, information is clearer,

and online services are available 24/7, putting residents in control of when and how they access information and request support.

Everyday services made simple

Instead of phoning for an appointment, residents can now book online in just a few clicks. Popular services, such as reporting fly-tipping or missed bin collections, are also available online, making everyday interactions faster and more straightforward. You can also explore our content in your preferred language with our new translation feature.

Smarter tools, quicker results

Interactive maps, smart address lookups and automated updates mean residents can track requests every step of the way. Whether it's a service request or a booking, the system keeps residents informed and saves time.

More time for personal support

Our customer helpdesk is available Monday to Friday, 8:45am–5:15pm (Wednesdays from 10am and Fridays until 4:45pm) for those unable to access services digitally. For those who can, our new investment means you can access online services anytime, at your convenience.



As featured on the front cover

The new system offers a smoother, more convenient experience reducing the need for phone calls or in-person visits.

Thorney Bay Pavilion opens featuring new café

Canvey Island's seafront has entered a new era with the arrival of the £1.5 million pavilion at Thorney Bay, which includes toilet facilities and a café.

The stylish café, run by Street & Co Coffee Shop, has quickly established itself as a favourite spot for residents and visitors. As well as serving hot drinks and lunch specials, regular

event nights are offered, ensuring there's always something new to enjoy.

The Pavilion is one of the first dog-friendly venues on the seafront. Families, walkers, and visitors are finding it a welcoming space to relax, while the café's modern facilities make it a practical stop for those working remotely or meeting friends.