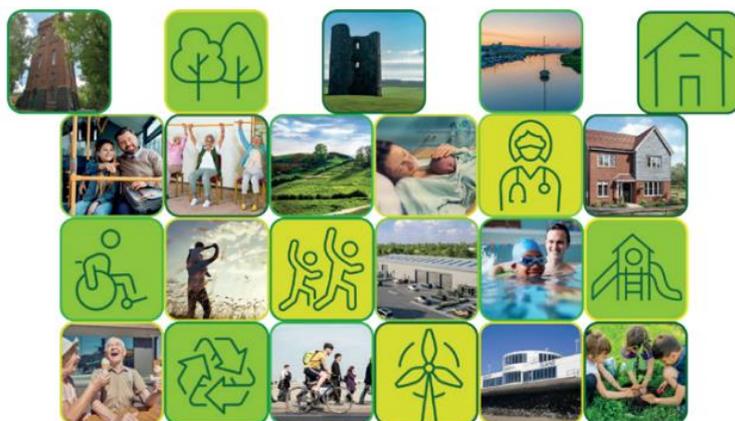


THE CASTLE POINT PLAN



Your community. Your views.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) / Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

Scoping Report, Draft Framework, and Initial Assessment of Strategic Options

July 2024



castlepoint

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

This document forms a Scoping Report, Sustainability Framework, and Initial Assessment of Strategic Options, as a part of the production of a Castle Point Plan Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporating a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). It supports the consultation of the Issues & Options consultation version of the Castle Point Plan.

An SA/SEA forms part of an assessment process designed to consider and report upon the significant sustainability issues and effects of emerging plans and policies, including their reasonable alternatives. Such an assessment informs the plan-making process by helping to refine the contents of such documents, so that they maximise the benefits of sustainable development and avoid, or at least minimise, the potential for adverse effects.

The purpose of this Report is to provide the context for, and determine the scope of, the SA/SEA of the emerging Castle Point Plan, setting out the assessment framework, and reporting upon the potential impacts of the strategic growth options being consulted on in the Castle Point Plan Issues and Options Document.

This report forms part of an iterative approach to the new emerging Castle Point Plan with a further draft of the Interim SA/SEA to be prepared alongside the preparation of the Regulation 19 Castle Point Plan.

1.2 The Castle Point Plan

The Castle Point Plan (referred to hereafter as the Plan) responds to a national requirement that Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) must set planning policies in a local authority area. Local Plans must be positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy in accordance with Section 20 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

In line with the NPPF 2023, the Plan should be clear in setting out the strategic priorities for the area and the policies that address these, and which also provide the strategic framework within which any neighbourhood plans may be prepared to shape development at the community level.

2. Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment

2.1 The Requirement for Sustainability Appraisal

The requirement for an SA/SEA emanates from national and international commitments to deliver sustainable development. The most used definition of sustainable development is that drawn up by the World Trade Commission on Environment and Development in 1987 which states that sustainable development is:

'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.'

This definition is consistent with the themes of the NPPF, which draws upon The UK Sustainable Development Strategy Securing the Future's five 'guiding principles' of sustainable development: living within the planet's environmental limits; ensuring a strong, healthy, and just society; achieving a sustainable economy; promoting good governance; and using sound science responsibly.

SEA is also a statutory process, originally required under the European SEA Directive 2001/42/EC, transposed in the UK by the SEA Regulations, and amended by the Environmental Assessments and Miscellaneous Planning (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018 (SI 2018/1232). As set out in the explanatory Memorandum accompanying the Brexit amendments, they are necessary to ensure that the law functions correctly following the UK's exit from the EU. No substantive changes were made by this instrument to the way the SEA regime currently operates. Therefore, the SEA Regulations remain in force, and it is a legal requirement for the Castle Point Plan to be subject to SA and SEA throughout its preparation.

The aim of the SEA is to identify potentially significant environmental effects created as a result of the implementation of the Plan or programme on issues such as:

'biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors' as specified in Annex 1(f) of the Directive.

The SA examines the effects of proposed plans and programmes in a wider context, considering economic, social, and environmental considerations to promote sustainable development. It is mandatory for Local Plans to undergo a Sustainability Appraisal in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 as amended by the Planning Act 2008, and in accordance with paragraph 32 of the NPPF (December 2023).

Whilst the requirements to produce a SA and SEA are distinct, Government guidance considers that it is possible to satisfy the two requirements through a single approach providing that the requirements of the SEA Directive are met. This integrated appraisal process will hereafter be referred to as SA.

2.2 The Sustainability Appraisal Process

The methodology for the SA of the Castle Point Plan at this stage follows that of the Sustainability Appraisal process as illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Stages in the Sustainability Appraisal Process and Local Plan Preparation¹

Castle Point Plan	Sustainability Appraisal
Evidence gathering and options development September 2023 - June 2024	Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline, deciding on the scope, developing and refining alternatives and assessing effects: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify other relevant policies, plans and programmes, and sustainability objectives 2. Collect baseline information 3. Identify sustainability issues and problems 4. Develop the sustainability appraisal framework 5. Test Local Plan objectives against the sustainability appraisal framework 6. Develop the Local Plan options including reasonable alternatives 7. Evaluate the likely effects of the Local Plan alternatives 8. Consider ways of mitigating adverse effects and maximising beneficial effects 9. Propose measures to monitor the significant effects of implementing the Local Plan 10. Consult the consultation bodies on the scope and content of the sustainability appraisal report
Issues and Options Consultation (Regulation 18) Summer 2024	
Developing the Plan September 2024 - December 2024	Stage B: Update and refine the scope or content of the sustainability appraisal post consultation, where necessary. Reconsult consultation bodies following changes, if necessary.
Publication of the Plan (Regulation 19) January 2025 - March 2025	Stage C: Prepare the sustainability appraisal report Stage D: Seek representations on the sustainability appraisal report from consultation bodies and the public
Submission April 2025 Examination June 2025 - December 2025	Stage E: Submit sustainability appraisal alongside the Castle Point Plan to be examined and where necessary update to reflect any proposed modifications
Adoption March 2026	Stage F: Post adoption reporting and monitoring <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare and publish post-adoption statement 2. Monitor significant effects of implementing the Local Plan 3. Respond to adverse effects

¹ Source: Planning Practice Guidance – Sustainability appraisal requirements for local plans (Paragraph: 013 Reference ID: 11-013-20140306 Revision date:06 03 2014

The relationship between the Castle Point Plan and other relevant planning policy and supporting documents is shown below in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Relationship between the Castle Point Plan and other planning documents

NATIONAL	National Planning Statements	National Policy National Planning Policy Framework and PPG		
LOCAL	Statement of Community Involvement	Local Plan		Minerals Plan Waste Plan
	Local Development Scheme	Strategic policies Spatial strategy Strategic allocations	Non-strategic policies Other site allocations Development management policies	Authority Monitoring Report
NEIGHBOURHOOD	Neighbourhood plans Non-strategic policies			
PLANNING POLICY DOCUMENTS	Supplementary Planning Documents	Design Codes	Master Plans / development briefs	Areas of major change or conservation

On 26 October 2023, the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill received Royal Assent and became an Act of Parliament². The Act sets out the Government’s proposals for reforming the planning system. Amongst other things, the Act sets the stage for the reform of current system for strategic environmental assessments by providing instead for “Environmental Outcome Reports” (EORs) designed to streamline the process for identifying and assessing the environmental impact of plans and projects. The specific requirements will be set out in forthcoming legislation, along with information about transition arrangements but for now, the requirement for SEA remains, as set out in existing legislation. Any changes to the legal framework for carrying out SA/SEA will be addressed as appropriate as the Castle Point Plan is prepared.

2.3 The Aim and Structure of this Report

This Report responds to Stage A in the SA process above.

The production of a SA Scoping Report has been produced to outline the methodology that will be used in the appraisal of the Plan at the Regulation 19 stage, culminating in a SA Environmental Report.

This report is accompanied by two Annexes. These are:

² Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023

- Annex A – Plans and Programmes
- Annex B – Baseline Information

Following the finalisation of this Report, a process of consultation will be undertaken. The focus of this consultation will be to seek comments from the three statutory consultees or ‘environmental authorities’ that are required to be consulted for all Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment documents. These are:

- The Environment Agency
- Natural England, and
- Historic England.

In addition to these, the consultation will seek to engage the wider community to encompass comprehensive public engagement.

3. Castle Point Plan Progress to Date

3.1 Castle Point Plan Initial Community and Stakeholder Engagement 2023 (Regulation 18 Consultation)

Between March 2023 and September 2023, the Council undertook an initial round of engagement which focused on determining the scope of issues to be addressed through the Castle Point Plan by engaging residents, key service providers, local businesses and other stakeholders on the key things that need to be addressed to deliver sustainable growth and improve the quality of places in Castle Point.

The engagement represented the first stage of the Plan-making process and helped to identify the issues for which policy options will be created to address.

Initial Community and Stakeholder Engagement 2023 Survey Questions

The survey questions were designed to elicit what the recipient's felt were most important to them about where they lived. The questions were:

- Choose up to five words that describe the area in which you live.
- What is most important to you about the area in which you live?
- If you could change any aspect of the local area in which you live, what would it be?
- Is there anything else you want to tell us about the local area in which you live?

As the initial engagement on the Castle Point Plan did not seek to make any policy choices, no SA was produced to accompany the Initial Community and Stakeholder Engagement consultation.

The Issues and Options are being presented as a formal 'Regulation 18' stage consultation of the Castle Point Plan, where the Council publishes an Options Engagement consultation with partners, the community, local businesses, and other stakeholders, and supporting evidence base.

The Publication of the Plan (Regulation 19) is scheduled for early 2025.

4. Sustainability Context, Baseline and Objectives

4.1 Introduction

The following section outlines the key findings of the SA Scoping Exercise which has been undertaken to inform this report. This includes an outline of the plans and programmes and the baseline information profile for the area.

4.2 Plans and Programmes (Stage A1)

Local Plans must have regard to existing policies, plans and programmes at national and regional levels and strengthen and support other local plans and strategies. It is therefore important to identify and review those policies, plans and programmes and sustainability objectives which are likely to influence the Plan at an early stage. The content of these plans and programmes can also assist in the identification of any conflicting content of plans and programmes in accumulation with the Plan. Local supporting documents have also been included within this list as they will significantly shape policies and decisions in the area.

Brexit

Whilst the SEA statutory process was originally required under the European SEA Directive, the Directive became transposed in the UK by the SEA Regulations and amended by the Environmental Assessments and Miscellaneous Planning (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018 (SI 2018/1232). As set out in the explanatory Memorandum accompanying the Brexit amendments, necessary to ensure that the law functions correctly following the UK's exit from the EU. No changes were made by this instrument to the way the SEA regime currently operates. Therefore, the SEA Regulations remain in force, and it is a legal requirement for the Castle Point Plan to be subject to SA and SEA throughout its preparation.

It is recognised that no list of plans or programmes can be definitive and as a result this report describes only the key documents which influence the Plan. Table 1 outlines the key documents, whilst a comprehensive description of these documents together with their relevance to the Plan is provided within Annex A.

Table 1: Key Documents

International Plans and Programmes
European Commission (EC) (2011) / Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment. (Transposed in the UK by the SEA Regulations and amended by the Environmental Assessments and Miscellaneous Planning (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018 (SI 2018/1232)
European Landscape Convention (Florence, 2002)

International Convention on Biological Diversity, United Nations (1992)
International Convention on Wetlands, UNESCO (1976)
United Nations Kyoto Protocol 1997 (UN Framework for Climate Change)
World Commission on Environment and Development 'Our Common Future' 1987
The World Summit on Sustainable Development Johannesburg Summit 2002
United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2015). 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
United Nations Paris Climate Change Agreement (2015)
UNESCO World Heritage Convention, UNESCO (1972)
European Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe, Council of Europe (1985)
European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (Valletta Treaty (1992)
Declaration on Forests and Land Use, United Nations (2021)
National Plans and Programmes
National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (updated)
The Localism Act 2011
National Planning Policy Framework, DLUHC (December 2023)
National Design Guide MHCLG (2021)
Nationally Described Space Standards Report (2015)
Build Back Better: Our Plan for Growth, HM Treasury (2021)
Safeguarding our Soils – A Strategy for England, DEFRA (2009)
Agricultural Act 2020, UK Parliament (2020)
Agricultural Transition Plan 2021 to 2024, DEFRA (2020)
UK Industrial Strategy: Building a Britain fit for the future, HM Government (2018)
Developing a sustainable framework for UK aviation - Scoping document (March 2011)
Transport Investment Strategy, DfT (2017)
Highways England Sustainable Development Strategy and Action Plan, Highways England (2017)
The Road to Zero, DfT (2018)
Decarbonising Transport: A Better, Greener Britain, DCLG (2021)
Future of Transport: Supporting Rural Transport Innovation, DfT (2023)
Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge, DEFRA (2023)

The Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy report to Parliament, Secretary for Transport (2022)
Building a Greener Future: Policy Statement (July 2007)
The Carbon Budget Delivery Plan, Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (2023)
UK Climate Change Risk Assessment, DEFRA (2022)
The British energy security strategy, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and Prime Minister's Office, 10 Downing Street (2022)
The Industrial Decarbonisation Strategy, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (2021)
The Environment Act 2021, HM Government (2021)
The Water Environment Regulations, HM Government (2017)
Future Water: The Government's Water Strategy for England, HM Government (2008)
The Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations, HM Government (2016)
UK Plan for Tackling Roadside Nitrogen Dioxide Concentrations, DEFRA and DfT (2017)
Clean Air Strategy 2019, Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (2019)
The Air Quality Strategy for England, DEFRA (2023)
National Planning Policy for Waste (NPPW), DCLG (2014)
The Waste Prevention programme for England: Maximising Resources, Minimising Waste, DEFRA (2023)
Waste Management Plan for England, DEFRA (2021)
The Waste (Circular Economy) (Amendment) Regulations, HM Government (2020)
The Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (2021)
The Energy Performance of Buildings Regulations, HM Government (2021)
The 25 Year Environment Plan, HM Government (2018)
Green Infrastructure Framework, Natural England (2023)
Flood and Water Management Act, HM Government (2010)
The UK Renewable Energy Strategy, HM Government (2009)
Climate Change Act 2008
Planning and Energy Act 2008
Community Infrastructure Levy An Overview, DCLG (9th May 2011)
Underground, Under Threat - Groundwater protection: policy and practice (GP3)

Land contamination risk management (LCRM), EA (2020, and subsequent updates)
Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006
Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2010
National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949
Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the SEA Regulations)
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004
The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010)
The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations, HM Government (2019)
Biodiversity Offsetting In England Green Paper, DEFRA (2013)
England Biodiversity Strategy Climate Change Adaptation Principles, DEFRA (2008)
Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953
Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979
Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
The Government's Statement on the Historic Environment for England 2010, HM Government (2010)
Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment, Historic England Advice Note 8, Historic England (2016)
The Heritage Statement of 2017, HM Government (2017)
Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (December 2023)
Sub-national Plans and Programmes
Essex Local Transport Plan 2011 (LTP3)
South Essex Transport Study, Jacobs, 2024 (LTP4) (underway to be completed by June 2024)
ECC Development Management Policies (February 2011)
ECC Parking Standards: Design and Good Practice 2009 Adopted by CPBC (June 2010) (to be updated once work completed)
Essex Wildlife Trust Living Landscape Statements / Plans
Essex Wildlife Trust Living Landscapes A Vision for the Future of Essex
Essex Green Infrastructure Strategy, ECC (2020)
Water Strategy for Essex, 2023, ECC
Essex Sector Development Strategy Targeting a stronger, more inclusive, and more sustainable future economy, ECC (2022)
The Essex Sector Development Report: Autumn 2023, ECC (2023)

The Essex Design Guide – Ecology and Biodiversity (updated 2023) Live Document
Essex County council 10 Year Plan Meeting the demand for school places in Essex 2019-2028 (ECC)
School Organisation 10-year plan for Essex school places 2024 – 2033 (ECC)
The Essex County Council Developers’ Guide to Infrastructure Contributions (Revised Edition 2023)
River Basin Management Plan Thames River Basin District 2022
Essex Rural Strategy: 2020 Vision for Rural Essex 2010 (under review to be launched 2024) Essex Rural Partnership
The Essex Design Guide – Health and Wellbeing (live document)
Essex Design Guide – Health Impact Assessments (live document)
Essex Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, ECC, 2022
Essex Healthy Places – Advice Notes for Planners, Developers and Designers (EPOA)
Everyone’s Essex: Our Plan for levelling up the county 2021 to 2025 (ECC)
Essex Climate Action Plan (2021 – 2025), ECC (2023)
Essex County Council Environmental Statement - Net Zero: Making Essex Carbon Neutral Essex Climate Action Commission (2023)
ECC Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy 2007-2032
ECC Draft Waste Strategy for Essex 2024 - 2054
The Sustainable Drainage Systems Design Guide for Essex 2020
Essex Minerals Local Plan (2014)
Essex Design Guide – Minerals and Waste Policy S8 – Safeguarding Mineral Resources (live document)
Essex Design Guide (2024) Live Document
Heritage at Risk- East of England Register 2022, Historic England
Local Plan and Programmes
Castle Point Local Plan 2014 (withdrawn)
Castle Point Local Plan 2016 (withdrawn)
Castle Point Local Plan 2018 (withdrawn)
Essex and Southend-on-Sea Waste Local Plan (2017)
South Essex Joint Strategic Plan Statement of Common Ground (June 2018)
South Essex Strategic Infrastructure Position Statement Stage A Report: Baseline Study, ASELA (2019)
Essex Minerals Local Plan Review 2025 - 2040
Castle Point Engagement Through Art (underway)

Local Reports and Assessments (Evidence Base)

Essex Coast Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) (2018)
Essex Coast Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation SPD (2020) Adopted
Local Wildlife Site Review (underway / to be completed Spring 2024)
Essex Wildlife Trust – Hadleigh and Daws Heath Living Landscape Vision, 2010
Essex Wildlife Trust – South Essex Marshes Living Landscape Vision, 2010
Castle Point Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2020) to be updated (completion 2024)
Green Belt Review – Part 1 (2018)
Essex Green Infrastructure Strategy, ECC, 2020
South Essex Blue and Green Infrastructure Strategy and Appendices (2020)
Castle Point Open Space Assessment (2023) (Final April 2024)
Sport and Leisure Facilities Needs Assessment (2018) to be updated
Playing Pitch Strategy 2018 (updated 2022)
South Essex Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (Part 1) (2018)
Castle Point Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (Part 1) to be completed 2024
Castle Point Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (Part 2) (completion due Autumn 2024)
Castle Point Transport Evidence Refresh, Mott Macdonald (2018)
Transport Assessment Update (to be completed June 2024)
Castle Point Local Walking and Cycling Improvement Plan Stage 1 and Stage 2 Analysis (2023)
Castle Point Bus Network Review (2023)
Castle Point Plan Viability Assessment (to be updated Autumn 2024)
Castle Point demographic projections 2023 – 2033, ONS
Essex & District Population Projections 2020 All Ages
Essex Area Profiles – Essex Open Data
South Essex Economic Development Needs Assessment (November 2017)
Essex Sector Development Strategy (Essex County Council 2022)
Economic Development Strategy (underway / to be completed Summer 2024)
South Essex Retail Study Volume 1 (May 2017)
Castle Point Town centre Shopping frontages Assessment (2019)
Castle Point Local Housing Needs Assessment (2023)

Castle Point Borough Gypsy, Traveller, and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment (2017) (to be updated / completed March 2024)
Greater Essex Gypsy, Traveller, and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment 2016 - 2033 (2018)
South Essex Gypsy, Traveller, and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment Update 2016 - 2038 (2019) (to be updated by the Castle Point Borough Council Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment 2024 for Castle Point)
South Essex Employment Land Availability Assessment Site Assessment Report (2022)
Castle Point Economic Development Site Review (Completion due May 2024)
Urban Capacity Assessment Stage 1 / Stage 2 (underway to be completed March 2024)
Castle Point Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (in progress)
Extract from the Essex Historic Environment Record – Castle Point Records (2013)
Castle Point Borough Urban Design Characterisation Report (2013)
Castle Point Design Code (in progress / to be completed Summer 2024)
Castle Point Appendix Five: Designated Historic Assets (2022) (to be reviewed)
Essex Air Quality Live Map (for Castle Point)
Castle Point Air Quality Annual Status Report (2023)
Essex Thames Gateway Historic Landscape Characterisation (2007)
Greater Essex Growth and Infrastructure Framework 2016 - 2036 (2016)
Essex Design Guide – South Essex Surface Water Management Plan (2022)
Essex County Council Interactive Flood Risk Map
Canvey Island 6 Point Plan (2015)
Canvey Island IUD Model (2015) (to be updated through SFRA to incorporate up to date climate change allowances – completion due Summer 2024)
Estuary 2021 report on Activity and Reach, Estuary-based arts organisations (2022)
Essex Open Data Census 2021 – initial release (Castle Point population data)
Subnational estimates of dwellings and households by tenure, England:2021 (Castle Point data)
Land Registry Data: UK House Price Index (Castle Point data)
ONS Data: Housing affordability in England and wales:2022 (Castle Point data)
Castle Point Authority Monitoring Reports
Castle Point Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2024
Sport England Active Lives Surveys (Castle Point data)

Castle Point Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Supplementary Planning Document, January 2024, Version for Consultation
Castle Point Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Report 2023 - for the Biodiversity Net Gain Supplementary Planning Document
Castle Point developers Contributions Guidance Supplementary Planning Document, March 2023
Castle Point Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule, May 2023
Castle Point Habitats Regulations Assessment and Appropriate Assessment, November 2021 (for withdrawn plan)
Habitats Regulations Assessment Scoping for Castle Point Plan (completion due Summer 2024.)
Habitats Regulations Assessment for Castle Point Plan (completion dur Autumn 2024)

4.3 Baseline Information (Stage A2)

Annex B details the complete Baseline Information profile for the strategic area relevant to the content of the Plan.

The following section outlines a summary of the key baseline information and therefore the current economic, social, and environmental situation in the Borough.

Table 2: Economic Baseline Summary

Economic Baseline		
Economy and Employment		
Baseline Summary	Emerging Issues for Castle Point	Emerging Issues for Thames Gateway South Essex
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic activity within the borough is greater than average (90.2%) Proportion of micro-businesses greater than average Construction companies make up over a quarter of total businesses in the borough Unemployment is lower than average Residents receive less than average gross pay and there is inequality in pay between men and women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infrastructure may not have capacity to support future business growth. Without employment land allocations, development could be sporadic and/or unsustainable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes following Brexit Investment decisions may falter or be sporadic

Economic Baseline		
Transport and Connectivity		
Baseline summary	Emerging Issues for Castle Point	Emerging Issues for Thames Gateway South Essex
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents have higher than average ownership of cars and vans Train commuters are greater on average, compared to the national and regional statistics Residents commuting to work by car is greater than regional and national averages Greatest outflow of population for work is generally to London Greatest inflow of population for work is from Southend The borough has second lowest number of road accidents, leading to death or serious injury in the county 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ageing population requires an adaptable approach to new transportation options Population increase could encourage private car ownership, leading to congestion and pollution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must adapt as is an area to vehicle improvements, electric and autonomous etc.

Table 3: Environmental Baseline Summary

Environmental Baseline		
Biodiversity and Nature Conservation		
Baseline summary	Emerging Issues for Castle Point	Emerging Issues for Thames Gateway south Essex
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The plan area contains an SPA and is within the zone of influence for others along the Essex Coast From the Essex Biodiversity Action Plan (EBAP) there are 25 species, and 10 habitat action plans covering Essex There are 6 SSSIs in Canvey Island. 5 of these 6 are meeting quality target of 100% favourable or unfavourable recovering condition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities for recreation Contribution to Essex Green Infrastructure Strategy Opportunities for biodiversity net gain via statutory protections Potential for declining biodiversity in Castle Point due to need for growth in the Borough aligned development without action, as well as climate change Without a new Castle Point Plan, it is 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green Infrastructure Strategy Link to London National Park City

Environmental Baseline

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an Essex Coastal Recreational Avoidance, Disturbance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) and adopted SPD • There are 43 Local Wildlife Sites • A BNG SPD has been prepared and positively screened and consulted upon. 	<p>possible that development could be sited inappropriately and adversely impact biodiversity sites.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new castle Point Plan will provide opportunities to incorporate updated policy to support the management, conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in connection with new development in Castle Point. New policy also provides an opportunity to manage the sensitivities of biodiversity sites and networks, e.g., locating development away from the most sensitive locations and providing for new green and blue infrastructure. • There will also be opportunities for policy to support the achievement of biodiversity net gain at new development in line with the national policy approach and to support the achievement of the emerging Local Nature Recovery Strategy 	
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Water and Flood Risk

Baseline summary	Emerging Issues for Castle Point	Emerging Issues for Thames Gateway South Essex
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased demand on water resources and sustainability of water supply • Increased requirement for wastewater treatment • Negative impacts on water quality through inappropriate development • Climatic change and more extreme weather events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development must not give rise to a deterioration in water quality • The new Castle Point Plan will provide the opportunity to ensure that development is located and designed to take into account the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development must not give rise to a deterioration in water quality • Associated with water quality and biodiversity, that a suitable amount of recreational land must be incorporated into development

Environmental Baseline

<p>leading to potential flood risk and coastal change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deterioration of wildlife in estuaries/ivers • Changes in leisure activities affecting coasts/estuaries • Impact of increased tourism including the England Coastal Path, free swimming, kayaking 	<p>sensitivity of the water environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new Castle Point Plan will need to ensure that new development should be planned to ensure appropriate adaptation measures (e.g., SuDS and flood resilient design) are included to mitigate flood risk (including green infrastructure) as a result of climate change • New development over the plan period will also need to be considerate of existing pressures on wastewater infrastructure and the potential for supporting any new infrastructure needed • Associated with water quality and biodiversity, that a suitable amount of recreational land must be incorporated into development 	
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Climate and Energy

Baseline summary	Emerging Issues for Castle Point	Emerging Issues for Thames Gateway South Essex
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Castle Point has a low percentage of total energy consumption from renewable bioenergy and waste sources • In Castle Point domestic practices produce the most carbon dioxide (46.36%) – a percentage lower than the county average 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure more energy efficient homes. Without the new Castle Point Plan, sustainable design and construction techniques may not be adopted in new build development • There is potential for the Borough to be subject to more frequent extreme weather events as well as increasing potential for flood risk as a result of climate change. A new Castle Point Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure more energy efficient homes • There is potential for the TGSE area to be subject to more frequent extreme weather events as well as increasing potential for flood risk as a result of climate change.

Environmental Baseline

	<p>could support the incorporation of appropriate adaptation measures through design. This may include tree planting and shelter in the public realm to allow people to take refuge from the effects of extreme weather events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Without the new Castle Point Plan, sites for development may be located in areas that are prone to the effects of climate change, such as in areas with a higher chance of flooding • The Council will continue to have an obligation to reduce carbon emissions with or without the new Castle Point Plan 	
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Air and Noise

Baseline summary	Emerging Issues for Castle Point	Emerging Issues for Thames Gateway South Essex
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main source of air pollution in the Borough relates to road traffic emissions, particularly from the principal roads in the Borough, the A13, A127, and A130. There is also pollution from commercial, industrial and domestic sources, and potential transboundary pollution sources, such as the power stations along the Thames Estuary and the oil refinery in Thurrock • Large areas of land around the Borough’s strategic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development should strike a balance between connectivity and potential noise and air quality impacts through effective mitigation • Recent national policies and emergence of new technologies are likely to improve air pollution, e.g., through cleaner fuels/energy sources • The new Castle Point Plan provides an opportunity to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development should strike a balance between connectivity and potential noise and air quality impacts through effective mitigation • Recent national policies and emergence of new technologies are likely to improve air pollution, e.g., through cleaner fuels/energy sources

Environmental Baseline

roads have noise impacts at 55-75 dB	contribute to improved air quality in the Borough through the sustainable siting of development and the promotion of alternative travel modes to the motorised vehicle, in line with national policy aspirations	
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Material Assets (including Minerals, Soil and Waste)

Baseline summary	Emerging Issues for Castle Point	Emerging Issues for Thames Gateway south Essex
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Castle Point recycles / composts less of its waste than the WCA and Essex averages There are no extraction sites or mineral deposits safeguarded by the MPA within Castle Point. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in development and greater CD&E waste arisings Increasing population generating more waste Any large regeneration and infrastructure projects will generate more waste. New Castle Point Plan will provide an opportunity to ensure sufficient land is available in appropriate locations for waste management facilities Recycling trends since 2018/19 suggest the recycling rates will continue to increase 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in development and greater CD&E waste arisings Increasing population generating more waste Any large regeneration and infrastructure projects will generate more waste Recycling trends since 2018/19 suggest the recycling rates will continue to increase

Landscape

Baseline summary	Emerging Issues for Castle Point	Emerging Issues for Thames Gateway south Essex
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Castle Point falls into two character areas, the Thames Estuary and South Essex Coastal Towns There are 5 Living Landscape area identified within the Borough 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities to use the brownfield sites ahead of any sites in the Green Belt Contribution to Essex Green Infrastructure Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green Infrastructure Strategy Link to London National Park

Environmental Baseline

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are 53 brownfield sites on the Brownfield Register with 824 minimum net dwellings • Very little agricultural land is used for farming • There are no protected lanes in the Borough • There is limited ancient woodland in the Borough. Daws Heath in particular contains a number of ancient woodlands connected by a network of hedgerows 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreational pressure - increased use of coastal pathways • Pressure from development – including new housing and infrastructure developments such as transport improvements • Harm to trees • The new Castle Point Plan provides opportunities to ensure that the variation in landscape character is taken into account in the design and siting of development to support its long term protection and enhancement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreational pressure - increased use of coastal pathways • Pressure from development – including new housing and infrastructure developments such as transport improvements • Harm to trees
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Cultural Heritage

Baseline summary	Emerging Issues for Castle Point	Emerging Issues for Shames Gateway south Essex
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are 7 Scheduled Ancient Monuments in Castle Point • There are 37 locally listed buildings records on the Local List • Most designated heritage assets would be protected without the Plan • Proposed East Coast Flyway as a Natural World Heritage Site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bringing heritage assets back into optimum use from being assets ‘at risk’ and ensuring other heritage assets do not become ‘at risk’ • Inappropriate development may harm the setting of such assets • The new Castle Point Plan provides an opportunity to update planning policy in the Borough to reflect changes in local circumstance and ensure the protection and enhancement of the Borough’s historic assets (including their settings) from inappropriate development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green Infrastructure Strategy • Link to London National Park City

Table 4: Social Baseline Summary

Social Baseline		
Population and Society		
Baseline summary	Emerging Issues for Castle Point	Emerging Issues for Thames Gateway south Essex
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Population change within the borough was 2% in a 10 year period. Considerably lower than the national and regional averages (2011-2021) The population within Castle Point is ageing and will continue to increase in age Predicted population change within Castle Point is lower than national predictions, but higher than the Essex predictions There are a surplus of school places at primary and secondary schools Out of seven secondary schools, two are rated below good Castle Point has a lower skilled workforce in comparison to the borough and region <p>Future Considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changing demographics and planning for suitable services Change to migration trends Inequality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Castle Point must adapt to having a greater than average percentage of ageing populous Population change within the Borough is considerably lower than average, possibly causing further problems with the ageing population. Likely evolution of the Baseline without the Plan No opportunity to plan positively to reduce deprivation and improve social inclusion No opportunities to address ageing population and meet the needs of a changing population Population growth and demographic change is likely to place additional demand on key services and facilities such as health, education and social care. Services are less likely to be delivered without a new Castle Point Plan in appropriate locations, or of sufficient quality and quantity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The wider area must adapt to having a greater than average proportion of old aged population
Housing		
Baseline summary	Emerging Issues for Castle Point	Emerging Issues for Thames Gateway South Essex
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The standard methodology indicates that over a ten 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homelessness rates could continue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TGSE may not meet objectively assessed needs

Social Baseline

<p>year period, Castle Point's housing need is 355 dwellings per annum using 2023 as a base date.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Castle Point's local housing Needs Assessment indicates that over a ten-year period Castle Point Housing need is 255 dwelling using 2023 as a base date • Housing supply is currently below the annual requirement • The percentage of privately owned dwellings is greater than the national average at 95% • Mean house prices are greater than national average, but lower than county average • Housing price to income ratio is higher than average at 11.2 • Homelessness is increasing at a higher rate 20/21; 232 21/22; 241 22/23; 248 • The borough requires 15 gypsy/traveller pitches as of 2043 <p>Future Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land availability • Tenure models • London effect • Homelessness • Good quality homes, in all tenures 	<p>to increase in future years</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • House prices could continue to increase, due to proximity to London • Homes could be constructed at a lesser standard due to constraints <p>Without the new Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not planning positively for an appropriate mix of housing types and tenures and locations • Stalling delivery of homes • Not meeting local housing need 	
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Health and Wellbeing

Baseline summary	Emerging Issues for Castle Point	Emerging Issues for Thames Gateway South Essex
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy Life expectancy within the borough is greater than England averages, but lower than the Essex average • Adult activity has increased in the period 2022-2023, at 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifestyle changes to more sedentary practices • Likely Evolution of the Baseline without the Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New developments not being designed to appropriately reflect the need to shift to more active lifestyles

Social Baseline

<p>present; it is slightly lower to the county, regional and national averages</p> <p>Future Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changing lifestyles and the rise in lifestyle related illnesses – sedentary lifestyles, lack of time spent outdoors etc • Changes to health and social care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not designing to encourage physical activity, safe neighbourhoods and with the needs of an ageing population in mind 	
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4.4 Data Limitations

Not all the information available for the authority was quantifiable; as a result, there are some gaps within the data set and a degree of reliance on qualitative assumptions for certain topics. It is believed however that the available information shows a comprehensive view on sustainability within the Plan Area. New data that becomes available will be incorporated within the SA at each stage of its development.

The information outlined within this Report represents a snapshot of the information available at the May 2024.

4.5 Key Sustainability Issues and Problems, and Sustainability Objectives (Stage 3)

The outcome of Stages A1 – A2 in the SA Process is the identification of key sustainability issues and problems facing the Plan Area which assist in the finalisation of a set of relevant Sustainability Objectives which can also provide a consistent approach between strategic level policies and site/area specific policies. Issues are also identified from the review of plans and programmes and a strategic analysis of the baseline information.

The appraisal of the Plan will be able to evaluate, in a clear and consistent manner, the nature and degree of impact and whether significant effects are likely to emerge from the Plan’s proposed content.

The following table outlines the key sustainability issues and considerations for the Plan Area.

Table 5: Key Sustainability Issues and problems, and the state of the environment in the absence of the Castle Point Plan

Key Issues	Description / Supporting Evidence	What would happen without the Castle Point Plan
Biodiversity	<p>From the Essex Biodiversity Action Plan³ (EBAP) there are 25 species, and 10 habitat action plans covering Essex</p> <p>A Biodiversity Net Gain Supplementary Planning Document has been prepared, and positively screened and consulted upon.</p> <p>A Local Wildlife Site Review for Castle Point is due for completion Spring 2024</p>	<p>Although biodiversity and ecological designations are protected internationally and nationally, allocating sites and devising policy criteria in a locally relevant plan-led system enables specialist input on a site-by-site basis and the best outcomes considering all alternatives. Without such a plan-led approach, sites may be developed without relevant policy criteria which could have cumulative negative impacts on habitats and designations.</p>
Designated Sites	<p>Castle Point has one European designated site – the Benfleet and Southend Marshes SPA and Ramsar. Nationally designated sites include 6 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). There are also 43 locally important nature conservation areas which are designated as Local Wildlife Sites (LoWSs).</p> <p>There is a Public Service Agreement (PSA) target of at least 95% of all nationally important wildlife sites being brought into favourable condition. 5 of the 6 sites in Castle Point are meeting this target. Benfleet and Southend Marshes has 8% of its area which is not meeting this quality benchmark.</p>	<p>The Essex coast Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) aims to protect and enhance the Essex coast. It protects and enhances the Essex coastline from residential development that is anticipated across Essex in current Local Plans. It fulfils the requirements of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 which provides statutory protection for European Sites this includes Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Ramsar Sites.</p>
Green Infrastructure and Ecosystem Services	<p>The parks, river corridors, open spaces, playing fields, nature reserves and woodlands, as well as allotments, street trees and private gardens in Castle Point provide opportunity for outdoor</p>	<p>A Green Infrastructure Strategy has been prepared and published Essex to fully understand and maximise the benefits of GI in the County. Devising policy criteria in a</p>

³ Integrating Biodiversity into Development, ECC (2007)

Key Issues	Description / Supporting Evidence	What would happen without the Castle Point Plan
<p>There are 5 Living Landscape areas identified within the Borough.</p> <p>There is ancient woodland in the northern part of the Borough.</p>	<p>activities, benefit to wildlife, flood regulation and many other benefits.</p>	<p>locally relevant plan-led system to reflect this enables specialist input on a site-by-site basis and the best outcomes considering all alternatives. Without such a plan-led approach, sites may be developed without relevant policy criteria which could have cumulative negative impacts on the integrity of GI and maintaining ecosystem services.</p>
<p>Water Environment</p>	<p>Each River Basin District across England has a management plan, which has been formed to meet the requirements of the Water Framework Directive. Castle Point falls into the Thames District. Under the Directive, the UK must ensure that there is no deterioration in the quality of its water bodies, and that all water bodies improve to reach 'good ecological status' as soon as possible. The management plan details the issues relating to water quality and how to address them.</p> <p>Beneath the River Basin district, catchment management plans are produced. In Essex, the Essex Rivers Hub works with partners and communities to protect and enhance rivers and watercourses. There are currently no catchment plans or projects for the rivers in Castle Point.</p>	<p>Without the Plan's policy direction, it is possible that permissions are granted without suitable planning conditions. Water quality issues such as these are often tackled through initiatives on sustainable drainage systems.</p>
<p>Landscape Features</p> <p>There are 5 Living Landscape areas identified</p>	<p>A landscape character assessment was undertaken of Essex in 2003. Castle Point falls into two character areas, the Thames Estuary</p>	<p>Allocating sites and devising policy criteria in a locally relevant plan-led system enables input by landscape specialists on a site-by-site basis and the best outcomes considering</p>

Key Issues	Description / Supporting Evidence	What would happen without the Castle Point Plan
<p>within the Borough.</p> <p>There is limited ancient woodland in the Borough.</p>	<p>and South Essex Coastal Towns.</p> <p>There are 53 brownfield sites on the Brownfield Register⁴.</p>	<p>all alternatives. Without such a plan-led approach, sites may be developed without relevant policy criteria which could have cumulative negative impacts on landscapes.</p>
<p>Minerals</p> <p>There are no extraction sites or mineral deposits safeguarded by the Essex Minerals Plan within Castle Point.</p>	<p>The majority of the sand and gravel produced in Essex (about 78%) is used within the County itself. This position looks unlikely to change over the long-term. Consequently, the main factor influencing production of sand and gravel in the future will be the need to meet the minerals demand for the whole of Essex created by major development and new infrastructure projects within Essex itself.</p>	<p>Allocating sites and devising policy criteria in a locally relevant plan-led system enables mineral deposits to be specifically safeguarded in line with Essex County Council input as the relevant Minerals Planning Authority. The absence of a plan could see a number of a planning applications come forward that are not aware of designated and safeguarded mineral extraction sites and their protection. Local Planning Authorities are required to map such sites within their local Plan for this purpose.</p>
<p>Soil</p>	<p>Agricultural land is very rarely associated with farming in the Borough. The costs associated with yields have reduced the number of arable farms in the Borough. Limited cropping occurs in the east of the Borough, most goes unused or is used for grazing. Much of the farmland is being promoted for housing developments.</p>	<p>Without a plan-led system, applications could come forward and be granted that do not consider the best and most versatile agricultural land in the borough. Although not a significant barrier to development, since much of the land is not used for agriculture, the plan has the potential to direct development, through allocations, to land that is of a worse quality in the first instance.</p>
<p>Cultural Heritage</p>	<p>The proposed Local List comprises now of 58 records, 13 in Benfleet, 12 on Canvey Island, including the relocated Stepping Stones as a separate</p>	<p>Although heritage and historic designations are protected nationally, allocating sites, and devising policy criteria in a</p>

⁴ Castle point Brownfield Register (2024)

Key Issues	Description / Supporting Evidence	What would happen without the Castle Point Plan
	<p>record, 29 in Hadleigh and 4 in Thundersley. 28 remain from the existing Local List.</p> <p>Castle Point has 38 listed buildings and churches within the Borough. This includes 3 grade I listed and 2 grade II* listed. Additionally the Borough features two designated Conservation Areas.</p> <p>There are 7 Scheduled Ancient Monuments within the Borough.</p> <p>There is a proposed East Coast Flyway as a proposed natural World Heritage Site to UNESCO</p>	<p>locally relevant plan-led system enables input by historic environment specialists on a site-by-site basis and the best outcomes all alternatives. It also takes account of local assets of historic and cultural interest that may not be designated. An absence of relevant policy criteria within a Local Plan may see applications come forward for development that conflict with the significance of such assets and their settings.</p>
Air Quality	<p>The main source of air pollution in the Borough relates to road traffic emissions, particularly from the principal roads in the Borough, the A13, A127 and A130. There is also pollution from commercial, industrial, and domestic sources, and potential transboundary pollution sources, such as the power stations along the Thames Estuary and the oil refinery in Thurrock.</p> <p>Large areas of land around the Borough's strategic roads have noise impacts at 55-75 dB.</p>	<p>Without the Plan's policy direction, it is possible that permissions are granted without suitable planning conditions which would maintain or enhance air quality and/or that development would be located in areas with poorer air quality.</p>
Energy consumption	<p>Just under half the Borough's 747.7GWh total energy consumption is from natural gas largely associated with domestic energy use⁵. In contrast it can be assumed that a much smaller use of energy is consumed from bioenergy and waste products, although</p>	<p>The Plan has the scope to allocate sites that are located in close proximity to sustainable transportation means and also promote their inclusion as part of site policy. An absence of a plan-led approach may see development arise that</p>

⁵ National Government Statistics, Regional and Local Authority Electric and Gas Statistics, 2022

Key Issues	Description / Supporting Evidence	What would happen without the Castle Point Plan
	national data shows that the UK's renewable energy consumption has increased between 2002 and 2022 ⁶ .	does not factor in such requirements, as well as the potential for renewable energy means and energy efficiency measures.
Climate change	<p>Mean summer precipitation has a 67% likelihood of decreasing by up to 10% across the whole region by 2020 and by 2050 the south of the East of England will see decreases by up to 20%.</p> <p>By 2050 much of the region is expected to see a mean winter precipitation increase of between 10% and 20%.</p>	An absence of a plan-led approach to development needs could see a larger number of sites not factoring in the cumulative impacts of water availability and infrastructure, as well as sustainable drainage systems.
Carbon Dioxide Emissions	<p>The transport industry is responsible for 34% of CO2 emissions within Castle Point, industry and commercial consumption totals 15% and the majority of emissions are associated with domestic energy use (48.5%)⁷.</p> <p>Castle Point is ranked as the tenth place district / borough in Essex for per capita Reductions (-2 tCO2e) in CO2 emissions with 40%, which is higher than the county percentage of 38%. Uttlesford ranked best with a 42.0% reduction⁸.</p>	<p>The Plan has the scope to allocate sites that are located in close proximity to sustainable transportation means and also promote their inclusion as part of site policy. An absence of a plan-led approach may see development arise that does not factor in such requirements, as well as the potential for renewable energy means and energy efficiency measures.</p> <p>An absence of the Plan could see less strategic commitment to minimise carbon emissions which would have increased effects on pollution output.</p>
Fluvial and tidal flood risk	In 2024 a SFRA is to be undertaken to accompany the Borough's development of the new Castle Point Plan. The SFRA is a planning tool that enables the council to	Site selection criteria, as well as a Flood Risk Assessment, are used to identify whether broad potential future locations for development represent the

⁶ UK renewable energy statistics 2023, Uswitch

⁷ 2005 to 2021 UK local and regional greenhouse gas emissions: statistical release (updated 6 July 2023), National Statistics

⁸ ibid

Key Issues	Description / Supporting Evidence	What would happen without the Castle Point Plan
	select and develop sustainable site allocations away from vulnerable flood risk areas. The SFRA will assist the council to make the spatial planning decisions required to inform the Castle Point Plan and recommendations.	most appropriate choices in terms of flood risk. Without the Plan, the level of detail used to inform decisions of a strategic nature may not be as robust, especially regarding cumulative impacts. In addition,
Surface water flood risk	Canvey Island is at the highest risk of surface water flooding, with a high probability of surface water flooding across the Borough as a whole.	policy content can be used to set conditions on developments or determine their refusal in areas of flood risk.
Transport	<p>85% of households in Castle Point own one or more vehicles, a higher percentage than for the East of England (83%) and far higher for England and Wales (77%)⁹.</p> <p>Castle Point has a lower proportion of residents driving to work by either car or van (40.83%) when compared to regional levels¹⁰. There is a higher usage of trains (8.89%) as a mode of transport within the Borough compared to the national trend (3.46%)¹¹. The proportion of residents who walk to work is lower than the regional and national levels¹². It is important that with the evolution of the plan further consideration is given to how future growth may be delivered to facilitate uplift in active and sustainable travel.</p> <p>The work destinations attracting the highest proportion of Castle Point residents are neighbouring Basildon (21.56%) and</p>	The Plan should seek the correct allocations to reduce emissions resulting from commuting miles whilst also exploring the validity of sustainable transportation: neither of which could be managed on a strategic scale without the Plan.

⁹ Nomis official census and labour market statistics, Car or van availability by household composition (Census 2021 statistics), 2024

¹⁰ Census data (2011) from ONS (updated Jan 2013)

¹¹ ibid

¹² ibid

Key Issues	Description / Supporting Evidence	What would happen without the Castle Point Plan
	<p>Southend-on-Sea (20.65%). The next most popular destinations for employment are City of London (10.93%), followed by Thurrock (6.94%)¹³.</p>	
Accessibility	<p>Residents of Castle Point are mainly commuting outside of the borough for work (23,573). With the largest outflow being neighbouring Basildon at 5,083 (21.6%), the greatest inflow to the borough is from Southend at 2,577 just smaller than half of the greatest outgoing commuters¹⁴.</p>	<p>If the plan did not factor in accessibility as a criterion for sustainable development, large proportions of the population would be without access to vital services, such as GPs. This could result in serious adverse impacts on residents of Castle Point. With the plan, it is simple to include considerations for accessibility to services from the onset and attain a more holistic approach.</p>
Life expectancy	<p>Life expectancy of residents within Castle Point Borough is a little lower than the regional average, and higher than the national average at 80.5 years for men and 84.4 years for women¹⁵.</p> <p>Castle Point has a higher percentage of people aged 45-65+ (63%) than the county average (59.8%)¹⁶.</p>	<p>The implications of increased life expectancy will mean increased pressure on services for the elderly, especially regarding care and suitable health services. These are key considerations in a plan-led system; the absence of which could see a less joined up approach between development across the Borough and sufficient care and health service requirements.</p>
Greenspace	<p>There is around 677ha out of 4,481ha of Accessible Natural Green Space in the Borough, with generally good access across the Borough apart from</p>	<p>The absence of a plan-led approach may see cumulative developments arise that do factor in the need for strategic open space, opportunities for</p>

¹³ Nomis official census and labour market statistics, Location of usual residence and place of work (inflow/outflow for Castle Point and Southend-on-Sea), (Census 2011 statistics)

¹⁴ ibid

¹⁵ Essex data – Essex JSNA 2022 Life Expectancy at birth, Essex County Council

¹⁶ Nomis, 2021 Census Profile for areas (ONS 2021 data)

Key Issues	Description / Supporting Evidence	What would happen without the Castle Point Plan
Sport participation	<p>the southern part of Canvey Island¹⁷.</p> <p>The proportion of adults participating between 30 – 149 minutes a week of moderate physical sport activity has decreased at the sub-national (11.6% from 13.6%) and national levels (11.1% from 12.4%). However, in the Borough, activity levels have increased to 10.1% in 2021-2022 from 8.5% in the 2015 – 2016 Active Lives Survey¹⁸.</p>	active travel and recreational requirements.
Housing delivery	<p>The NPPF's requirement for housing targets to be determined objectively at the Borough level (OAN) will ensure a higher dwellings per annum target than previously.</p> <p>The absence of an adopted Plan post- NPPF in which to determine housing targets and broad locations for growth.</p>	Housing will largely be delivered through 'planning by appeal' with a lack of evidence provided by a plan-led approach. This may see housing delivered contrary to local needs.
House ownership and need	<p>There are 38,977¹⁹ dwellings within Castle Point Borough, 94.7²⁰% of which are privately owned.</p> <p>Over the period 2023-2043, there is an overall affordable housing need of 4,208 dwellings in the Borough. This equates to an average of 210 overall affordable housing dwellings per annum²¹.</p>	A plan-led system allows specific developments to be come forward in line with tenure and housing mix requirements as specified in relevant policy. Then absence of a Plan and the relevant evidence base is unlikely to see such needs delivered.
Gypsy and Traveller sites	There is likely to be a future demand for more Gypsy and Traveller sites in Castle Point.	The absence of pitch provision in a plan-led system is likely to see an increase in unauthorised sites.
School Capacity	School age population numbers are projected to grow relatively slowly and school	Without factoring in school capacity within a plan-led

¹⁷ Castle Point Open Space Assessment, 2023

¹⁸ Sport England Active Lives Survey 2021 -2022

¹⁹ Table 100: Number of dwellings by tenure and district, England, DLUHC (Dec 2023)

²⁰ ibid

²¹ Castle Point Local Housing Needs Assessment 2023, Opinion Research Services

Key Issues	Description / Supporting Evidence	What would happen without the Castle Point Plan
	capacity within Castle Point is expected to be sufficient to accommodate children in the Borough up until 2033. There are no deficits of school places reported in the 10-year Plan for the Castle Point Borough, and there are no expansion projects currently in the pipeline.	system, cumulative pressure would be put on existing educational facilities.
Utilities and internet	The projected housing increases facing the wider County will put pressures on utility suppliers.	Without a plan-led system the cumulative and holistic approach to house building is unlikely to be evidenced, making it difficult to plan suitable infrastructure.
Transport	The projected housing increases facing the wider County will put pressures on road and rail infrastructure.	Without a plan-led system the cumulative and holistic approach to house building is unlikely to be evidenced, making it difficult to plan suitable infrastructure.
Qualifications	<p>The population of Castle Point has in general fewer qualifications than the overall national population. 76.2% of residents aged 16+ of the population of the Borough for 56,659 people are qualified to at least level 1 or higher compared to 81.9% in England. Level 1 represents foundation GNVQ, NVQ 1 or up to 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C.</p> <p>The most significant difference is that Castle Point has comparatively lower proportions of the population qualified at Level 4 and above. Castle Point has a lower skilled workforce in comparison to the county²² and nationally²³.</p>	Without a plan-led system the cumulative and holistic approach to house building is unlikely to be evidenced. This has implications for school capacities and the potential need for new educational facilities to be developed to support the future population.
Job density	Job density in Castle Point (0.64) is lower than across the county (0.80), region (0.84) and nation (0.88) ²⁴ .	The plan has the scope for a holistic approach to development to ensure that housing and employment development are allocated

²²Skill levels distribution across the UK (2019 estimates), 2022

²³ Education, England and Wales: Census 2021, ONS

²⁴ Nomis official census and labour market statistics – jobs density (2022)

Key Issues	Description / Supporting Evidence	What would happen without the Castle Point Plan
Employment	The proportion of the Borough's working population who are economically active but unemployed is 2.2% which is below sub-national (2.5%) and national (2.9) unemployment figures ²⁵ .	in support of one another. The plan can also safeguard sites for future employment use. The absence of a plan would likely see a less joined-up approach to housing and employment needs which could result in greater flows of commuters into and out of the Borough with may exacerbate pressure on the roads.

The above highlighted key sustainability issues have been used to form SA Objectives for the Plan. These are detailed in the following table alongside their relevance to the environmental, social, or economic themes of sustainable development and the corresponding topic in the SEA Directive.

Table 6: The SA Objectives

SA Objective	Environmental	Social	Economic	Corresponding topic in the SEA Directive
1) To conserve and enhance biodiversity (habitats, species, and ecosystems) and geodiversity within the Borough	✓			- Biodiversity - Climatic factors - Soil - Flora - Fauna - Water
2) To conserve and enhance water quality and resources, and ensure sustainable reuse of water to accommodate growth	✓	✓		- Water - Biodiversity - Human Health - Population - Climatic Factors
3) To maintain, conserve and enhance the quality and local distinctiveness of the Borough's landscape	✓	✓		- Landscape - Cultural Heritage - Historic environment

²⁵ Nomis official census and labour market statistics – Economic activity status (2022)

SA Objective	Environmental	Social	Economic	Corresponding topic in the SEA Directive
character and townscapes				
4) To protect, conserve and enhance land and soils and mineral resources, minimise the loss of agricultural land, whilst reducing land contamination	✓		✓	- Soil - Material Assets - Climatic factors - Water - Biodiversity - Landscape
5) To contribute to the sustainable use of land.	✓	✓	✓	- Landscape - Material Assets - Soil
6) To maintain and enhance the borough's cultural heritage assets and areas, assets of historical and archaeological importance and their settings	✓	✓		- Cultural Heritage - Historic environment - Landscape
7) To reduce contributions to climatic change by adapting and responding to the implications of a changing climate	✓	✓		- Climatic Factors - Water - Air - Soil - Population - Human Health - Biodiversity - Flora - Fauna
8) To adapt and respond to reduce vulnerability and increase resilience to extreme weather events and flooding which may be caused by climate change	✓	✓	✓	- Climatic Factors - Water - Air - Soil - Population - Human Health
9) To maintain and enhance air quality in the Borough, reducing contributions to climate change, and reduce noise pollution.	✓	✓		- Climatic Factors - Water - Air - Human Health - Population - Material assets - Biodiversity
10) To reduce the need to travel and	✓	✓	✓	- Climatic Factors - Air

SA Objective	Environmental	Social	Economic	Corresponding topic in the SEA Directive
promote and encourage the use of sustainable and active alternative methods of travel to motorised vehicles to reduce road traffic congestion and mitigate air pollution				- Water - Human Health - Population
11) To improve the quality, range and accessibility to essential services, facilities, green infrastructure and open space		✓	✓	- Population - Air - Climatic Factors - Human health
12) To reduce levels of deprivation and disparity, and social exclusion		✓	✓	- Population - Human Health
13) To improve the population's health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities.	✓	✓	✓	- Population - Human Health
14) To provide appropriate, affordable and decent housing and accommodation to meet existing and future needs of the whole community, and reducing disparity		✓	✓	- Population - Material Assets - Human health
15) To promote the efficient use of resources and ensure the necessary infrastructure to support sustainable development		✓	✓	- Population - Human Health - Material Assets - Soil - Landscape
16) To improve the education and		✓	✓	- Population

SA Objective	Environmental	Social	Economic	Corresponding topic in the SEA Directive
skills of the population				
17) To ensure sustainable employment provision and economic growth by improving efficiency, competitiveness and adaptability of the local economy and help people gain access to satisfying work appropriate to their skills, potential and place of residence		✓	✓	- Population - Human health - Material Assets
18) To maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of town and retail centres		✓	✓	- Population - Material Assets - Human health
19) To promote the sustainable management of waste	✓	✓	✓	- Population - Human Health - Material Assets
20) To ensure that the digital infrastructure available meets the needs of current and future generations.		✓	✓	- Population - Material Assets

4.6 The Compatibility of the SA Objectives

A total of 20 SA Objectives have been derived for the appraisal of the Plan. They are based on the scope of the document, policy advice and guidance and to the assessment of the current state of the environment.

It is useful to test the compatibility of SA Objectives against one another in order to highlight any areas where potential conflict or tensions may arise. The result of this internal compatibility of the SA Objectives is shown in the figure below. In the compatibility matrix the 20 SA objectives are numbered in sequence along each axis, and they represent a balance of economic, social, and environmental factors.

The following key has been used to illustrate their compatibility:

✓	Where the objectives are compatible
?	Where it is uncertain the objectives are related
0	Where the objectives are not related
X	Where the objectives are incompatible

The matrix below illustrates the compatibility of the SA Objectives.

The compatibility of the objectives relevant to the Plan is shown in the compatibility matrix above. Instances of uncertainty between objectives are explained further:

- **Objectives 1, 2 and 9 with Objectives 14, 15, & 17:** SA Objectives 1, 2 and 9, which seek to retain, enhance and conserve biodiversity, the water environment and air quality, may conflict with the general principles of delivering housing, infrastructure and employment development as specified in SA Objectives 14, 15 and 17. This potential incompatibility does not mean that these objectives are not achievable in unison however; development in appropriate and less locations and / or with suitable mitigation measures would be considered compatible.
- **Objectives 3 and 4 with Objectives 7, 14, 15 & 17:** SA Objectives 3 and 4, regarding retaining and enhancing landscapes and soil quality may not always be compatible with the development requirements of housing, employment and infrastructure and also reducing the contributions to climate change in some renewable energy schemes (SA Objective 7). This is location specific however and related predominantly to allocating development sites in suitable locations and with mitigation where necessary and viable.
- **Objective 6 with Objectives 8, 14, 15 & 17:** SA Objective 6, regarding maintaining and enhancing cultural heritage assets and their settings may not be compatible with development requirements (SA Objectives 14, 15 and 17). In addition, potential incompatibility exists with SA Objective 7 and 8 where some energy efficiency and renewable energy measures and also flood alleviation schemes or systems may not be compatible with the historic environment.

4.7 The Approach to Assessing the Castle Point Plan's Policy Content

The SA of the Plan appraises the document's policies against the Sustainability Objectives (SOs) outlined in the above framework. The aim is to assess the sustainability effects of the document following implementation. The appraisal will look at the secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium, and long-term permanent and temporary effects in accordance with Annex 1 of the SEA Directive, as well as assess alternatives and suggest mitigation measures where appropriate. The findings will be accompanied by an appraisal matrix which will document the effects over time.

For clarity, within the SA, appraisals will be set out in the same format as shown in the following table.

Table 7: Impact on Sustainability Objectives

Sustainability Objective		Temporal Effect		
		Short term	Medium term	Long term
1	To conserve and enhance biodiversity (habitats, species and ecosystems) and geodiversity within the Borough			
2	To conserve and enhance water quality and resources.			
3	To conserve and enhance the quality and local distinctiveness of the Borough's landscape character and townscapes			
4	To conserve and enhance soil and mineral resources.			
5	To contribute to the sustainable use of land.			
6	To maintain and enhance the borough's cultural heritage assets and areas, assets of historical and archaeological importance and their settings.			
7	To reduce contributions to climatic change.			
8	To reduce vulnerability and increase resilience to extreme weather events and flooding which may be caused by climate change.			
9	To maintain and enhance air quality in the Borough and reduce noise pollution.			
10	To promote and encourage the use of sustainable methods of travel.			
11	To ensure accessibility to services.			
12	To reduce poverty and social exclusion.			
13	To improve the population's health and reduce health inequalities.			
14	To provide appropriate housing and accommodation to meet existing and future needs of the whole community.			
15	To promote the efficient use of resources and ensure the necessary infrastructure to support sustainable development.			
16	To improve the education and skills of the population.			
17	To ensure sustainable employment provision and economic growth.			
18	To maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of town and retail centres.			
19	To promote the sustainable management of waste.			

Sustainability Objective		Temporal Effect		
		Short term	Medium term	Long term
20	To ensure that the digital infrastructure available meets the needs of current and future generations.			

The content to be included within the table responds to those ‘significant effects’ of the policy or element of the Plan subject to appraisal. Appraisals will also look at the following:

- Temporal effects.
- Secondary, Cumulative and Synergistic effects.
- The appraisal of Alternatives.
- Impacts on indicators, and
- Proposed mitigation measures / recommendations

These, and ‘significant effects’ are further described in the following sub-sections.

4.7.1 Description of ‘Significant Effects’

The strength of impacts can vary dependant on the relevance of the policy content to certain sustainability objectives or themes. Where the policies have been appraised against the Sustainability Objectives the basis for making judgements within the assessment is identified within the following key:

Possible impact	Basis for judgement
++	Strong prospect of there being significant positive impacts
+	Strong prospect of there being minor positive impacts
?	Possibility of either positive or negative impacts, or general uncertainty
0	No impact
N/A	Not applicable to the scope or context of the appraised content
-	Strong prospect of there being minor negative impacts and mitigation would be possible
--	Strong prospect of there being significant negative impacts with mitigation unlikely to be possible (pending further investigation)

Commentary is also included to describe the significant effects of the policy on the sustainability objectives.

4.7.2 Description of ‘Temporal Effects’

The appraisals of the policies contained within the Plan recognise that impacts may vary over time. Three time periods have been used to reflect this and are shown in the appraisal tables as S (short term), M (medium term) and L (long term). For the purpose of the policy elements of the Plan S, M and L depict:

(S) Short term: early stages of the plan period (i.e. before 2030).

(M) Medium Term: middle stages of the plan period (2030-2035)

(L) Long term: latter stages of the plan period (2035) and where relevant beyond

4.7.3 Description of 'Secondary, Cumulative and Synergistic Effects'

In addition to those effects that may arise indirectly (secondary effects), relationships between different policies will be assessed in order to highlight any possible strengthening or weakening of impacts from their implementation together. Cumulative effects respond to impacts occurring directly from two different policies together, and synergistic effects are those that offer a strengthening or worsening of more than one policy that is greater than any individual impact.

4.7.4 Description of 'Alternatives Considered'

Planning Practice Guidance states that reasonable alternatives are the different realistic options considered by the plan-maker in developing the policies in its plan. They must be sufficiently distinct to highlight the different sustainability implications of each so that meaningful comparisons can be made. The alternatives must be realistic and deliverable.

Alternatives for the direction of policies will be appraised and chronicled alongside each appraisal where relevant and identified, together with the reason for their rejection / non-progression. Reasonable alternative borough-wide development strategies are assessed in Section 6.

4.7.5 Description of 'Proposed Mitigation Measures / Recommendations'

Negative or uncertain impacts may be highlighted within appraisals. As such, mitigation measures may be needed, and these will be highlighted in this section for each policy where relevant. In addition to this, this section will also include any recommendations that are not directly linked to negative or uncertain impacts, but if incorporated may lead to sustainability improvements.

4.8 Assumptions Made in the Assessment of the Plan's Content

4.8.1 Policy and site Appraisals

It should be noted that the appraisal of options is not straightforward, in reflection of the need to create a 'level playing field' for the assessment of both allocated and alternative sites. A lot of evidence commissioned for the Plan may have been progressed in line with the allocated sites and strategy as preferred. To fairly appraise options to the same level of detail, a lot of this information may not be considered within future appraisal work. The appraisal of the Plan's options will be undertaken using information that is relevant for use across all options.

To further reflect a consistency of approach, regarding sites, the detailed information submitted for each site by the landowners / developers of each option may not be considered in those instances where they can be seen to offer different levels of information. As such, it may be the case that only those site boundaries and the quantum of development for options have been taken from the respective submissions.

5. Sustainability Frameworks

5.1 The Appraisal of Policies (SA Framework)

The SA Framework is an important tool in the SA process. It provides the context against which the Plan's content can be assessed and sets out the SA objectives with additional criteria / key questions that should be asked to decipher whether the suggested approach achieves the desired sustainability outcomes; and indicators which can monitor the impact of the documents.

To meet the requirements of the SEA Regulations, the views of the three statutory environmental bodies (Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency) are being sought in relation to the scope of the sustainability appraisal, and the sustainability appraisal framework that results from it. This ensures that key environmental considerations are adequately covered by the framework.

Additionally, the sustainability assessment framework has been used to assess the initial strategic growth options set out in the Castle Point Plan Issues and Options Document. Not only does this provide an initial insight into the relative sustainability benefits and issues associated with each of the strategic growth options. It also provides the statutory environmental bodies and other stakeholders the opportunity to see how the sustainability appraisal framework is working in practice, which assists with drawing out any opportunities for improvement at this interim stage in its preparation.

The SA Framework proposed for assessing the Castle Point Local Plan can be found in the following table. It is this framework which has been used to assess the strategic growth options in the Castle Point Plan Issues and Options Document in section 6 of this report. The appraisal of the strategic options may be updated following consultation on this document, if the SA Framework is adjusted to reflect comments received.

Table 8: The SA Framework (Policy Content)

SA Objective	Sustainability Issues(s)	Key Questions – Strategy and Policy	Potential Indicators
<p>1) To protect, conserve and enhance biodiversity (habitats, species, and ecosystems) and geodiversity within the Borough</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halting biodiversity net loss and securing achievement of biodiversity net gain • Conservation and protection of nationally and locally important designated sites • Condition of some of the SSSIs • Sensitivity of water environment to physical change • Green infrastructure • Brownfield habitats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it conserve and enhance natural/semi natural habitats? • Will it conserve and enhance species diversity, and in particular avoid harm to indigenous BAP priority species? • Will it maintain and enhance sites designated for their nature conservation interest? • Will it maintain and enhance the connectivity of habitats and their ability to deliver ecosystem services e.g., flood risk management, climate change mitigation & adaptation and access for health? • Will there be any impacts on the water environment as a result of hydro morphological changes and vice versa? • Will it help to reverse the national decline in at risk species? • Will it seek and lead to the creation of new habitats? • Does it seek the requirement of an appropriate level of ecological assessment relevant to a hierarchy of designations / 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spatial extent of designated sites within the borough • Achievement of Biodiversity Action Plan targets • Ecological potential assessments • Distance from site to nearest designated site • Ancient Woodland • Other sensitive designated or non-designated receptors • Condition of the nearest sensitive receptors (where viable) • Site visit surveys on typical abundance and frequency of habitats (DAFOR scale) • Change in the number and area of designated ecological sites (Natural England) • Recorded condition/status of designated ecological sites (Natural England)

SA Objective	Sustainability Issues(s)	Key Questions – Strategy and Policy	Potential Indicators
		<p>ecological sites including brownfield sites, at the planning application stage?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is Policy clear and cogent on the requirements of developers in adequately identifying any impacts on a site level? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recorded visitor numbers on designated European sites (Natural England, Council records) RAMS monitoring results Contribution to the LNRS
<p>2) To conserve and enhance water quality and resources, and ensure sustainable reuse of water to accommodate growth</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing water quality and resources Pollution of water courses Water scarcity Timely provision of new water services infrastructure in line with growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it help to ensure that good status of surface water is achieved and that deterioration in the status of waters is prevented? Will it help to ensure that good status of groundwater is achieved in the status of waters is prevented? Will it support the achievement of Water framework Directive Targets? Will it protect and improve the quality of coastal water? Will it promote sustainable use of water? Will it maintain water availability of water dependent habitats? Will it support the provision of sufficient water supply and treatment infrastructure in a timely manner to support new development? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water quality (and trends) in river basin district (river quality data). Recorded water quality in rivers, estuaries, and groundwater from River Basin Management Plans (Environment Agency). Compliance with emissions limits in identified locations. Compliance with environmental quality standards in identified locations. Recorded Water Resource Availability Status (Environment Agency, Anglian water, Essex & Suffolk Water). Bathing water quality (EA).

SA Objective	Sustainability Issues(s)	Key Questions – Strategy and Policy	Potential Indicators
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it lead to no deterioration on the quality of water bodies? • Does it promote the inclusion of Sustainable Drainage Systems in new developments? • Is Policy clear and cogent on the requirements of developers in adequately identifying any impacts at the site level? 	
<p>3)To maintain, conserve and enhance the quality and local distinctiveness of the Borough’s landscape character and townscapes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The local landscape varies in its sensitivity to change • The need to ensure the protection and enhancement of local distinctiveness and character 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will landscape character areas be protected? • Will it enhance and/or conserve the countryside? • Does it seek the regeneration of existing urban areas? • Will it protect and enhance the settlement and its setting within the landscape? • Will it protect and enhance landscape character and townscapes? • Will it promote high quality design in context with its urban or rural landscape? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developments permitted contrary to Landscape Character Assessment ‘sensitivities to change’ • Number and extent of field boundaries affected • Percentage of applications permitted on the borough’s best agricultural land (from ALC) • Development brought forward through regeneration projects (Council records)

SA Objective	Sustainability Issues(s)	Key Questions – Strategy and Policy	Potential Indicators
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does it seek to minimise the impacts of coalescence and sprawl? • Is Policy clear and cogent on the requirements of developers in adequately identifying any impacts on a site level? 	
<p>4)To protect, conserve and enhance land and soils and mineral resources, minimise the loss of agricultural land, whilst reducing land contamination</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protecting the best and most versatile soil. • The need to maintain and/or enhance soil quality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it seek to protect the borough's best and most versatile soil (Grade 3)? • Will it seek to direct development away from Grade 3 soil, where feasible and in consideration of the impacts and benefits of development? • Will it encourage the use of previously developed land and/or the reuse of existing buildings? • Will it prevent land contamination and facilitate remediation of contaminated sites? • Does it seek to protect soil quality, including the remediation of contaminated sites? • Does it ensure that development is directed outside of Minerals Safeguarding Areas (MSAs) in the first instance? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportional loss of Grade 3 agricultural land. • Change in recorded soil quality (Environment Agency) • Allocations recorded on best agricultural land quality (1,2,3) (Council records/DEFRA)

SA Objective	Sustainability Issues(s)	Key Questions – Strategy and Policy	Potential Indicators
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is Policy clear and cogent on the requirements of developers in adequately identifying any impacts on a site level? 	
5) To contribute to the sustainable use of land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The presence of the Green Belt within the Plan area and maintaining its function The need to prioritise development on previously developed land and/or make use of existing buildings and infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it encourage the efficient use of land? Does it seek to ensure appropriate densities for new development? Does it set out different densities appropriate to different settlements / areas? Does it encourage the recycling of derelict and other urban land? Does it broadly seek to protect the Green Belt in line with its five predominant purposes? Does it respond to the findings of the Green Belt Review (GBR)? Is Policy clear and cogent on the requirements of developers in adequately identifying any impacts on a site level? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of development directed to Grade 3 agricultural land. Proportion of development on brownfield land. Percentage of development recorded on greenfield / brownfield land (Council records) Density of development
6) To maintain and enhance the Borough’s cultural heritage assets and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintaining and enhancing designated and non-designated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it protect and enhance sites, features and areas of historical, archaeological, and cultural value in both urban and rural areas? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change in the number of designated and non- designated heritage assets (English Heritage, Council records)

SA Objective	Sustainability Issues(s)	Key Questions – Strategy and Policy	Potential Indicators
<p>areas, assets of historical and archaeological importance and their settings.</p>	<p>heritage and cultural assets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will areas of historic character be protected from development? • Does it seek to enhance the range and quality of the public realm and open spaces? • Will it reduce the amount of derelict, degraded and underused land? • Does it encourage the use of high quality design principles to respect local character? • Will any adverse impacts be reduced through adequate mitigation? • Will it protect and enhance buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas and landscapes of heritage interest or cultural value (including their setting) meriting consideration in planning decisions? • Will it protect and enhance sites, features and areas of archaeological value in both urban and rural areas? • Will it enhance accessibility to and the enjoyments of cultural heritage assets? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proximity to nearest heritage asset (including its setting): • Scheduled Monument? • Listed Building? • Conservation Area? • Registered Historic Park or Garden? • Site identified in the Historic Environment Record? • Building of local interest? • Other historic feature? • Number and spatial extent of listed buildings • Number and spatial extent of scheduled monuments • Buildings At Risk Register number of heritage assets recorded as ‘at risk’ (English Heritage) • Heritage at risk surveys • Percentage of conservation area demolished or otherwise lost.

SA Objective	Sustainability Issues(s)	Key Questions – Strategy and Policy	Potential Indicators
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is Policy clear and cogent on the requirements of developers in adequately identifying any impacts on a site level? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amount of derelict properties and/or vacant land Number of heritage assets being positively removed from the heritage at risk register. Amount of damage to listed buildings or scheduled monuments Management of designated and undesignated historic environment assets Numbers of undesignated historic environment assets lost through the planning process.
7)To reduce contributions to climatic change by adapting and responding to the implications of a changing climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Future climate change projections Energy consumption High private vehicle usage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it reduce emissions of greenhouse gases by reducing energy consumption? or Will it reduce emission of greenhouse gases/head of population by reducing energy consumption? Will it lead to an increased proportion of energy needs being met from renewable sources? Does it ensure more sustainable modes of travel are provided? Will it encourage greater energy efficiency? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carbon Dioxide emissions Estimated borough CO2 emissions (Department of Energy and Climate Change) Energy consumption GWh/households Spatial extent of flood zones. Percentage of energy supplied from renewable sources. Installed MWs of commercial scale renewable energy schemes (Council records)

SA Objective	Sustainability Issues(s)	Key Questions – Strategy and Policy	Potential Indicators
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it improve the efficient use of natural resources? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air quality monitoring data
<p>8) To adapt and respond to reduce vulnerability and increase resilience to extreme weather events and flooding which may be caused by climate change.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preservation of Green Infrastructure and ecosystem services • Addressing pluvial, fluvial, and coastal flood risk • The need to ensure that the built environment adapts to the impact of climate change and extreme weather events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it ensure suitable adaptation to climate change? • Will it reduce the risk of damage from extreme weather events? • Does it seek to avoid development in areas at risk of flooding? • Does it seek to avoid increasing flood risk in areas away from initial development? • Does it take account of climate change in relation to flooding? • Does it seek to manage and mitigate the risk of flooding? • Is/will the sequential test being used to reach decisions on development proposals? • Will developer contributions be utilised for the provision and maintenance of flood defences? • Does it require sustainable drainage systems to be included within new development? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incidences of flooding and location • Distance of site to floodplains • SFRA results • Incidences of flood warnings in site area • Distance to areas that are susceptible to surface water flooding –updated Flood Map for Surface Water Flooding (EA) • On site and nearby topography via ordnance survey mapping • Number of applications where there was a failure to pass the sequential test, even though sites at lower risk of flooding were available, but other planning reasons were given for granting planning permission. • Estimated number of properties at risk from flooding (Environment Agency) • Number of schemes incorporating SUDs mechanisms (Essex County Council)

SA Objective	Sustainability Issues(s)	Key Questions – Strategy and Policy	Potential Indicators
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it minimise the risk of flooding from rivers and watercourses? • Will it minimise the risk of flooding on the coasts/estuaries? • Will it reduce the risk of coastal/ estuarine erosion? • Will it reduce the risk of damage from extreme weather events? • Is Policy clear and cogent on the requirements of developers in adequately identifying any impacts on a site level? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distance from existing flood defences
<p>9) To maintain and enhance air quality in the Borough, reducing contributions to climate change, and reduce noise pollution.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving air quality • Clean vehicle infrastructure to encourage uptake of technologies • Reducing noise nuisance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it improve, or not detrimentally affect air quality? • Will emissions be limited to levels that will not damage natural systems and affect human health? • Does it ensure that National Air Quality Standards are met at relevant points? • Does it seek to protect rural areas from increased traffic? • Does it seek to reduce, or not detrimentally affect noise levels? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PM10 emissions • NO2 emissions • Recorded traffic flows • Location and extent of AQMAs in relation to infrastructure requirements • Location and extent of potentially significant junctions in relation to infrastructure requirements • Percentage of water bodies at good ecological status or potential

SA Objective	Sustainability Issues(s)	Key Questions – Strategy and Policy	Potential Indicators
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is Policy clear and cogent on the requirements of developers in adequately identifying any impacts on a site level? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of water bodies assessed at good or high biological status Percentage of water bodies assessed at good chemical status Number of Sustainable Drainage Systems applications and number granted Ambient noise levels Development on PDL
<p>10) To reduce the need to travel and promote and encourage the use of sustainable and active alternative methods of travel to motorised vehicles to reduce road traffic congestion and mitigate air pollution</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High private vehicle usage Public transport, walking and cycling coverage across the Borough Improving opportunities for active transport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it increase and/or improve the availability of sustainable transport modes? Will it seek to encourage people to use alternative modes of transport other than private vehicle? Will it contribute positively to reducing social exclusion by ensuring access to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services? Will it reduce the need to travel? Will it lead to the integration of transport modes? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to services and business' by public transport Indices of Multiple Deprivation Travel to work methods, distances, and flows (Census) Car ownership Network performance on roads Public transport punctuality and efficiency Provision of key infrastructure projects (Essex County Council)

SA Objective	Sustainability Issues(s)	Key Questions – Strategy and Policy	Potential Indicators
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it improve rural public transport? • Will it promote the integration of sustainable school travel and transport? • Will it reduce commuting? • Will it increase the proportion of freight transported by rail or other sustainable modes? • Will it maintain and improve access to key services and facilities for all sectors of the population? • Will it reduce journey times? • Is Policy clear and cogent on the requirements of developers in adequately identifying any impacts on a site level? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent of cycle lanes
<p>11) To improve the quality, range, and accessibility to essential services, facilities, green infrastructure and open space</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to services such as education, healthcare and jobs, and other amenities • Reducing the need to travel • Access to natural greenspace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it contribute positively to reduce social exclusion by ensuring access to jobs, shopping, services, and leisure facilities for all? • Will it improve access to jobs, shopping, services, and leisure facilities? • Will it reduce the need to travel? • Will it increase traffic in rural areas? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents’ opinion on availability of open space/leisure facilities • Access to services by public transport, walking or cycling • Public and active travel infrastructure • Indices of Multiple Deprivation – sub-domain scores

SA Objective	Sustainability Issues(s)	Key Questions – Strategy and Policy	Potential Indicators
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-sustainability (little need to out commute for jobs and services) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does it protect or increase village facilities? Will it lead to the integration of transport modes? Does it seek to concentrate development and facilities in town centres or where access via sustainable travel is greatest? Will it assist in reducing the number of road casualties and ensure ease of pedestrian movement especially for the disabled? Will it maintain and improve access to key services and facilities for all sectors of the population? Will it increase access to the open countryside? Will it increase access to public open space? Will it improve access to cultural facilities? Will it reduce journey times? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural England Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards Recorded traffic flows KSI casualties for adults and children Car ownership Location of site with regards to areas of high deprivation Loss of key services (Council records) Ultra-fast broadband coverage

SA Objective	Sustainability Issues(s)	Key Questions – Strategy and Policy	Potential Indicators
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it help to enhance the connectivity of more remote, rural settlements? 	
12) To reduce levels of deprivation and disparity and social exclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The need to reduce inequality and social exclusion To manage the impact of changing demographics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it reduce poverty and social exclusion in those areas most affected? Will it reduce benefit dependency? Does it support the changing population profile of the area? Will it encourage engagement/participation in community/cultural activities? Will it contribute to regeneration activities? Will it enhance the public realm? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long term unemployment rate Proportion of the population who live in wards that rank within the most deprived 10% and 25% of wards in the country (Index of Multiple Deprivation) Ageing population Prevalence of different community groups (cultural and religious)
13) To improve the population's health and reduce health inequalities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access and provision of healthcare and social care in line with growth Needs of an ageing population Needs of disabled population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it reduce health inequalities? Will it improve access to high quality health facilities and / or social care services? Will it improve air quality? Will it improve water quality? Will it increase access to sport and recreation facilities and open space? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Life Expectancy Indices of Multiple Deprivation – sub-domain scores Residents' opinion on availability of open space/leisure facilities Air Quality Management Areas (number and performance) and PM10 emissions KSI casualties for adults and children

SA Objective	Sustainability Issues(s)	Key Questions – Strategy and Policy	Potential Indicators
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs of different community groups (cultural and religious) • Promoting healthy lifestyles • Addressing crime and anti-social behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it encourage healthy lifestyles? • Will it improve services for young people? • Will it contribute positively to reducing social exclusion for all members of society? • Will it ensure access to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services is available for all? • Will there be measures to increase the safety and security of new development and public realm? • Does it seek to reduce inequalities between areas and support cultural identity? • Will it encourage access by walking or cycling, and will it increase the overall rates of walking and cycling? • Does it respond to ageing demographics in all relevant areas of influence throughout the plan period? • Will it support the diverse range of health needs within the community? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural England Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt) • Recorded key offences • Location and extent of recreational facilities to development site • Location and extent of accessible greenspace to development site • Proximity of site to healthcare facilities • Percentage of population obese • Condition of residents' general health (Census - QS302EW) • Change in the amount of Accessible Natural Greenspace (Natural England) • Level of recorded crime and antisocial behaviour (Essex Police) • Participation in local sporting clubs

SA Objective	Sustainability Issues(s)	Key Questions – Strategy and Policy	Potential Indicators
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it contribute to a healthy living environment? (noise, odour etc?) • Will it reduce crime/ fear of crime and anti-social activity? • Will it promote design that discourages crime? • Will it avoid locating development in locations that could adversely affect people's health? • Will it support those with disabilities? 	
<p>14) To provide appropriate, affordable and decent housing and accommodation to meet existing and future needs of the whole community, and reducing disparity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the delivery of a sustainable supply of housing to meet needs • Ensuring the delivery of a mix of housing types and tenures and price-points (including affordable housing) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it provide housing which meets local needs? • Will it increase the range and affordability of housing for all social groups to the designated target? • Will it reduce the number of unfit homes? • Does it allow for homes to be adapted for lifetime use, or make provisions for them to be included in new development? • Does it seek to deliver self-build and custom build homes? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • House Prices • LA dwelling stock below the 'Decent Home Standard' • Indices of Multiple Deprivation Score – particularly Housing and Services Domain and the Living Environment Deprivation Domain • Number of affordable dwelling completions • Annual dwelling completions (Council records) • New homes approved in the monitoring year (council records)

SA Objective	Sustainability Issues(s)	Key Questions – Strategy and Policy	Potential Indicators
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does it respond to the needs of an ageing population? • Is there scope to deliver the independent living agenda in larger developments? • Will it contribute to the delivery of sustainable homes? • Are dwellings easily accessed by transport links, jobs, services, commercial areas, and leisure facilities? • Will homes be designed to enhance the existing street scene creating a better cultural heritage & public realm? • Will homes be sufficiently phased during the plan period and beyond in light of the East of England Plan or subsequent targets? • Will homes be supported by adequate greenspace? • Does it make provision for gypsy and traveller, and travelling showpeople accommodation? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Size and age of housing stock • Access to sustainable transport links • Population projections and forecasts • Crime rates • Recorded homeless rates (ONS) • Net additional dwellings – size, type, affordable (Council records) • Number of household headship rates • Council Housing Waiting List

SA Objective	Sustainability Issues(s)	Key Questions – Strategy and Policy	Potential Indicators
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it contribute to the supply of housing? • Will it reduce homelessness? • Will it contribute not meeting demand for a range and mix of housing including affordable housing and specialist housing? 	
<p>15) To promote the efficient use of resources and ensure the necessary infrastructure to support sustainable development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing water resources and water quality • Open space • Housing growth to be supported by jobs, and services • Ensuring Health Infrastructure meets local needs • Ensuring education infrastructure meets local needs • Ensuring that local utilities are able to accommodate growth • Foul water disposal / sewerage infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does it seek to ensure the provision of sufficient infrastructure in line with projected increases in population? • Does it ensure that adequate school expansion, new healthcare and community facilities are provided where the size of housing development requires it? • Will water resources be able to accommodate growth? • Does it ensure the reinforcement of wastewater treatment works or the provision of alternatives (where required) to support growth? • Will financial contributions be adequate to provide the necessary infrastructure? • Does it seek to promote the minimisation of waste at its source, and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water cycle study • S106 agreement contributions • Transport Assessments • Additional capacity of local schools • Number of GPs and dentists accepting new patients • ANGSt • Amount of waste recycled/landfilled.

SA Objective	Sustainability Issues(s)	Key Questions – Strategy and Policy	Potential Indicators
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transport Infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> integrate solutions into the design of new development? Does it ensure that infrastructure /highway improvements will be made (where required) to support growth? Will it ensure that infrastructure is provided prior to use or through phasing of development? Will it improve the efficient use of natural resources? 	
16) To improve the education and skills of the population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery of education provision in line with growth Matching the skills in the workforce to employment needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does it seek to improve existing educational facilities and/or create more educational facilities? Does it seek to improve existing training and learning facilities and/or create more facilities? Will the employment opportunities available be mixed to suit a varied employment skills base? Will new housing be supported by school expansion or other educational facilities where necessary? Will it improve qualifications and skills of young people and adults? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GCSE or equivalent performance (Department for Education) Level 2 qualifications by working age residents % (32.8% for Castle Point) of working age population with NVQ level 4+ or equivalent qualification (Census 2021 / LG Inform (Nomis)) Employment status of residents Average gross weekly earnings Standard Occupational Classification Number of apprenticeship courses on offer

SA Objective	Sustainability Issues(s)	Key Questions – Strategy and Policy	Potential Indicators
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it support the provision of an adequate range of educational and child care facilities? 	
<p>17) To ensure sustainable employment provision and economic growth by improving efficiency, competitiveness and adaptability of the local economy and help people gain access to satisfying work appropriate to their skills, potential and place of residence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressing gender wage differences • Support and maintain a sustainable local economy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it encourage employment and reduce unemployment overall? • Does it secure more opportunities for residents, of all abilities, and in all employment sectors, to work in the Borough? • Will new housing be supported by adequate local employment opportunities? • Will it improve business development, attract investment, and enhance competitiveness? • Does it support small businesses to grow and encourage business innovation? • Will it make land and property available for business development? • Does it prevent further loss of retail and other services to rural areas? • Will it lead to development having an adverse impact on employment for existing facilities? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment land availability • Typical amount of job creation (jobs per ha) within different use classes (Council records). • Percentage change and comparison in the total number of VAT registered businesses in the area • Businesses by industry type • Amount of vacant industrial floorspace • Amount of high quality agricultural land • Travel to work flows • Employment status by residents and job type • Job densities • Economic activity of residents • Average gross weekly pay • Proportion of business in rural locations

SA Objective	Sustainability Issues(s)	Key Questions – Strategy and Policy	Potential Indicators
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will emerging policy ensure there is adequate future provision of Early Years and Childcare? • Will it improve the resilience of business and the economy? • Will it promote growth in key sectors? • Will it improve economic performance in disadvantaged years? • Will it encourage rural economy and diversification? • Will it encourage indigenous business? • Will it encourage inward investment? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount of retail, leisure, and office floorspace in town centres. • Implemented and outstanding planning permissions for retail, office, and commercial use • Number and type of services • Pedestrian footfall count • Number of post offices closed down • Number of village shops closed down • Number of businesses paying business rates (Council records) • Numbers employed by industry (Oxford Economics - East of England Forecast Model) • % of A1 use class and vacant units in town centres (Council records) • Gender pay gap levels
18) To maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of town and retail centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declining high streets and how to enhance town centres and their role. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it increase vitality of existing towns and local centres? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment land availability • Typical amount of job creation (jobs per ha) within different use classes (Council records).

SA Objective	Sustainability Issues(s)	Key Questions – Strategy and Policy	Potential Indicators
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competition from neighbouring Boroughs and Districts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does it promote and enhance the viability of existing centres by focusing development in such centres? • Will retailing in town centres be enhanced in areas of identified need? • Will it increase the range of employment opportunities, shops, and services available in town centres? • Will it decrease the number of vacant units in town centres? Will it enhance the local distinctiveness within the centre? • Will it enhance the Borough’s potential for tourism? • Does it enhance consumer choice through the provision of range of shopping, leisure, and local services to meet the needs of the entire community? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount of retail, leisure, and office floorspace in town centres. • Implemented and outstanding planning permissions for retail, office, and commercial use • Number and type of services • Pedestrian footfall count • Number of post offices closed down • Number of village shops closed down • Number of business paying business rates (Council records) • Numbers employed by industry (Oxford Economics - East of England Forecast Model) • % of A1 use class and vacant units in town centres (Council records)
19) To promote the sustainable management of waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need to manage waste arisings in accordance with the waste hierarchy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it reduce household waste generated/ head of population? • Will it reduce commercial and industrial waste generated/ head of population? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estimated household waste produced (Council records) • Estimated quantity of household waste recycled (Council records)

SA Objective	Sustainability Issues(s)	Key Questions – Strategy and Policy	Potential Indicators
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing waste arisings • Pressures from housing and employment growth on waste management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it increase rate/head of population of waste reuse and recycling? • Is Policy clear and cogent on the requirements of developers in ensuring appropriate waste management? 	
<p>20) To ensure that the digital infrastructure available meets the needs of current and future generations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need to realise opportunities for social inclusion through the provision of improved online services • Support the growth of the digital economy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does it seek to ensure that new development benefits from super-fast broadband connectivity? • Will it boost the digital economy? • Does digital technology enhance the retail and leisure offer in the Borough? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average Broadband speeds • County records • Data from www.superfastessex.org • Smart cities data

5.2 The Appraisal of Sites

In addition to the above SA Framework formulated for the appraisal of the policy content within the Plan, a separate framework is proposed for the appraisal of the sustainability of site allocations within the document.

Sites will be subject to appraisal using a pro forma developed taking in the key issues of the area and all relevant available information across a range of sustainability criteria. In addition, the consultation on this Scoping Report allows input from the Statutory Consultees and any other relevant stakeholders and interested parties. Any comments on this pro forma may result in changes to the site assessment framework and will be documented at the Regulation 19 stage.

As some evidence base work is available at the time of writing, it is likely that the site assessment framework will need to change to factor in new evidence as it emerges. These updates will take place as part of the assessment of the Regulation 19 plan.

It should be noted that site assessments are not intended to be a detailed project-level assessment of each site, such as that provided by an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). It is intended that this assessment will provide a strategic level assessment highlighting those broad impacts of the sites to inform the plan-making process. Impacts and ranges of impacts highlighted in the site pro forma use quantitative information as far as is possible.

It is important to understand that at this time the sites in the Issues & Options document are identified as potential sources of urban development only. They are not allocations for development at this stage. They are identified to clearly set out the types of choices that need to be made, and so that these choices can be considered alongside options for growth outside of the urban area. Put simply, the more development opportunities that are identified on urban sites, the lower the risk is to our borough's precious Green Belt areas.

All the sites identified are considered to have the potential to be more intensively used, but the Council has not at this point determined which sites will be included in the draft Castle Point Plan. These choices will be taken once consultation feedback has been received and analysed. **It is important to reiterate that no decision has yet been taken as to which sites will be included in the draft Castle Point Plan.** This means sites will very likely be added to or excluded from the draft Castle Point Plan following consultation.

The site pro forma can be found in the following table.

Table 9: The Site SA Pro Forma

SA Objective	Site Criteria	Source	Significant Positive (++)	Positive (+)	Negative (-)	Significant Negative (--)	Uncertain Unknown (?)	No / negligible impact (0)
1) To protect, conserve and enhance biodiversity (habitats, species and ecosystems) and geodiversity within the Borough	Proximity of any: SSSIs, SPA and Ramsar sites (including impact risk zones)	GIS mapping	Site is not within or adjacent to an impact risk zone	Site is within an impact risk zone but is for a use that would not require consultation with Natural England	Site is adjacent to a SSSI, SPA or Ramsar site	Site is within a SSSI SPA or Ramsar site	Where Applicable Site is within a SSSI, SPA or Ramsar site impact risk zone and would require consultation with Natural England	Where Applicable
	Proximity to the Draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) Interventions	GIS mapping	Site is not defined as a site within the draft LNRS areas	Site has potential to contribute to LNRS in an urban opportunity area	Site is within an area defined by the draft LNRS	N/A	Where applicable	Where Applicable
	Ancient woodland	GIS mapping	N/A	Site is not located outside of an ancient woodland and 15m buffer area	Site is within 15m buffer area of an ancient woodland	Site is within an ancient woodland		Where Applicable
	Local Wildlife Sites	GIS mapping	N/A	Over 100m	Within 100m	On site	Where applicable	Where applicable
2) To conserve and enhance water quality and resources, and ensure	Proximity of any water bodies	GIS mapping Aerial Mapping	N/A	Over 100m	Within 100m	On site	Where applicable	Where applicable

SA Objective	Site Criteria	Source	Significant Positive (++)	Positive (+)	Negative (-)	Significant Negative (--)	Uncertain Unknown (?)	No / negligible impact (0)
sustainable reuse of water to accommodate growth		Site information						
3) To maintain, conserve and enhance the quality and local distinctiveness of the Borough's landscape character and townscapes	Will any Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) be affected?	GIS mapping	N/A	No TPOs on site	2 TPOs or less on site	3 or more TPOs on site	TPOs adjacent to site	Where applicable
	How large is the site?	GIS mapping Landscape Character Assessment	N/A	Less than 5ha	5ha or greater	N/A	N/A	N/A
	What area type does the site fall within?	GIS mapping Draft Design Code	Town centre location	Local centre	Sub-urban area	Rural area	Site falls in more than one category	Where applicable
	Is the site on the edge of the urban area?	GIS mapping	N/A	Site is not on the edge of the urban area	Site is on the edge of the urban area	N/A	N/A	N/A
4) To protect, conserve and enhance land and soils and mineral resources,	Is the site on contaminated land?	GIS mapping	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes / Potential Impact for information only, as commentary	Site is not on contaminated land

SA Objective	Site Criteria	Source	Significant Positive (++)	Positive (+)	Negative (-)	Significant Negative (--)	Uncertain Unknown (?)	No / negligible impact (0)
minimise the loss of agricultural land, whilst reducing land contamination							in site appraisals	
	Is the site within the mineral safeguarding area?	GIS mapping	N/A	Not in mineral safeguarding area	Within mineral safeguarding area	N/A	Site is partially in the mineral safeguarding area	Where applicable
5)To contribute to the sustainable use of land	Is the site greenfield or brownfield?	Aerial mapping	100% Brownfield	Brownfield (approx. 75% plus)	Greenfield (approx.75% plus)	100% Greenfield	Approx. 50% brownfield / greenfield	Where applicable
6)To maintain and enhance the Borough's cultural heritage assets and areas, assets of historical and archaeological importance and their settings	Conservation Area	Heritage Record	Site not being within a Conservation Area	Site not being within a Conservation Area	Site within 100m of a Conservation Area	Site is within a Conservation Area	Uncertainty surrounding impacts	Where applicable
	Listed Buildings	Heritage Record	Site brings an "at risk" building off the register	More than 100m from a Listed Building	Site is within 100m of a listed building	Site contains a listed building	Uncertainty surrounding impacts	Where applicable
	Scheduled (Ancient) Monuments	Heritage Record	Site is more than 500m from a Scheduled Monument	Site is more than 100m from a Scheduled Monument	Site is less than 500m from a Scheduled Monument	Site is less than 100m from a Scheduled Monument	Uncertainty surrounding impacts	Where applicable
	Archaeology	Heritage Record	Site is not in the Archaeological consultation zone	N/A	N/A	Site is in the Archaeological consultation zone	Uncertainty surrounding impacts	Where applicable
	Is the site in the Essex Historic	Essex historic	N/A	Site is not within the Essex	Site is within the Essex historic	N/A	Site partially within Essex historic	Where applicable

SA Objective	Site Criteria	Source	Significant Positive (++)	Positive (+)	Negative (-)	Significant Negative (--)	Uncertain Unknown (?)	No / negligible impact (0)
	Landscape Area?	landscape assessment		historic landscape area	landscape area		landscape area	
7) To reduce contributions to climatic change by adapting and responding to the implications of a changing climate	There will not be a comparable level of information available to assess all sites against this objective – features that would reduce contributions to climate change would only be known at the proposal / application stage.							
8) To adapt and respond to reduce vulnerability and increase resilience to extreme weather events and flooding which may be caused by climate change	Would the site be located in an area of high / medium / low / very low risk of flooding from surface water?	EA mapping	Very low	Low	High	N/A	Medium Risk Or Site is on zone boundary Or Where applicable	Where applicable
	Is the site at risk from tidal flooding?	GIS mapping	Site is within Zone 1 (no flood risk)	Site contains a minimum of 80% Flood Zone 1	Site is within Zone 2	Site is within Zone 3a / 3b	Uncertain (to include commentary in appraisal)	Where applicable
	Is the site at risk from fluvial flooding?	GIS mapping	Site is within Zone 1 (no flood risk)	Site contains a minimum of 80% Flood Zone 1	Site is within Zone 2	Site is within Zone 3a / 3b	Uncertain (to include commentary in appraisal)	Where applicable

SA Objective	Site Criteria	Source	Significant Positive (++)	Positive (+)	Negative (-)	Significant Negative (--)	Uncertain Unknown (?)	No / negligible impact (0)
	Is the site located within 19m of sea defences?	GIS mapping	N/A	Site is further than 19m from the sea defences	Site is within 19m of the sea defences	N/A	Part of the site falls within the 19m buffer zone of the sea defences	Where applicable
9) To maintain and enhance air quality in the Borough, reducing contributions to climate change, and reduce noise pollution	Is the site close to an area identified with having poor air quality?	Essex Air Quality data GIS mapping	N/A	Nearest AQ monitor annual average lower than 30No2	Nearest AQ monitor annual average lower than 40No2	Nearest annual average monitor higher than 40No2	Where applicable	Where applicable
	Is the site within proximity to waste management facilities?	Allocations in the Adopted Waste Local Plan (2017)	Site is beyond 250m of an either existing or allocated site for a waste management facility	N/A	Site is within 250m of either an existing or proposed site allocated for a waste management facility	N/A	Where applicable	Where applicable
	Would the site be affected by noise?	GIS mapping	Site would not be affected by noise	Site would be affected by noise at < 55 dba	Site would be affected by noise at > 54-70dba	Site would be affected by noise at > 70dba	Part of the site would be affected by noise	Where applicable
	Is the site within proximity to a designated	GIS mapping	Site is beyond 250m of a designated employment site	Site is beyond 100m of a designated	Site is within 250m of a designated employment site	Site is within 100m of a designated employment site	Where applicable	Where applicable

SA Objective	Site Criteria	Source	Significant Positive (++)	Positive (+)	Negative (-)	Significant Negative (--)	Uncertain Unknown (?)	No / negligible impact (0)
	employment area?			employment site				
10) To reduce the need to travel and promote and encourage the use of sustainable and active alternative methods of travel to motorised vehicles to reduce road traffic congestion and mitigate air pollution	Access to bus stop	GIS mapping	Within 400m of a bus stop with at least one bus per hour	Within 800m of a bus stop with at least one bus per hour	Over 800m to a bus stop served with at least one bus per hour	N/A	Where applicable	Where applicable
	Urban permeability	Aerial mapping	Proposal states new footpaths or cycleways will be provided	N/A	N/A	Loss of public footpath or cycleway	Diversion of public footpath or cycleway required	Where applicable
	Does the proposal provide mixed uses?	Site proposals	Site is located in a town centre or local centre and proposes mixed uses	Site proposes mixed uses	Site does not provide mixed uses	Site replaces mixed use with single use	Where applicable	Where applicable
11) To improve the quality, range, and accessibility to essential services, facilities	Does the site provide safe highway access?	To be updated where specialist input available.	Existing site with suitable existing access	Adequate or good access off adequate or good standard of road. Not affected by safety issues	Poor access and / or road of poor standard. Likely to be subject to safety issues from surrounding uses incapable of mitigation	No access	Access poor but capable of being improved. Road of adequate or good standard. Likely to be affected by safety issues but capable of mitigation	Where applicable

SA Objective	Site Criteria	Source	Significant Positive (++)	Positive (+)	Negative (-)	Significant Negative (--)	Uncertain Unknown (?)	No / negligible impact (0)
							OR Unclear from information	
	Is the site close to local services? (shops, community facilities,	GIS mapping	Site is within 400m of a town centre/ local centre/ retail park/ local services	Site is within 800m of a town centre/ local centre/ retail park/ local services	Site is further than 800m to a town centre/ local centre/ retail park/ local services	N/A	Some services within 400m or 800m of site	Where applicable
12) To reduce levels of deprivation and disparity, and social exclusion	Is the site close to employment opportunities ?	GIS mapping	Within 400m of town centre, local centre or a designated employment area	Within 800m of town centre, local centre or a designated employment area	More than 800m from a town centre, local centre or a designated employment area	N/A	Some employment opportunities provided outside of town centres, local centres or designated employment areas	Where applicable
13)To improve the population's health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities	Does the site meet Natural England's ANGSt? ANGSt recommends that everyone, wherever they live, should have an accessible	GIS mapping	Site conforms to 4/4 of ANGSt criteria	Site conforms to 3/4 of ANGSt criteria	Site conforms to 1/4 of ANGSt criteria	Site conforms to none of the ANGSt criteria	Where applicable Site conforms to 2/4 of the ANGSt criteria	Non-residential allocations

SA Objective	Site Criteria	Source	Significant Positive (++)	Positive (+)	Negative (-)	Significant Negative (--)	Uncertain Unknown (?)	No / negligible impact (0)
	natural greenspace: -of at least 2ha in size, no more than 300m (5 minutes' walk) from home; -at least 1 accessible 20ha site within 2km of home; -1 accessible 100ha site within 5km of home; And 1 accessible 500ha site within 10 minutes of home							
	Will the site see a loss of local open space?	GIS	Proposals include local open space	No loss of local open space	N/A	Loss of local open space	Uncertain	Where applicable
	Will the site provide new community use?	Allocated Use / existing uses	Proposals increase community uses on site	No loss of community use	N/A	Proposal reduces community uses in the area	Uncertain	Where applicable

SA Objective	Site Criteria	Source	Significant Positive (++)	Positive (+)	Negative (-)	Significant Negative (--)	Uncertain Unknown (?)	No / negligible impact (0)
	Is the site within close proximity of a GP surgery?	GIS mapping	Site is within 400m of a GP surgery	Site is within 800m of a GP surgery	Site is further than 800m to a GP surgery	N/A	Uncertain	Where applicable
	Does the site provide new GP floorspace?	Proposed allocation	N/A	Site provides new GP floorspace	Site removes GP floorspace	N/A	Uncertain	Where applicable
14) To provide appropriate, affordable and decent housing and accommodation in alignment with the findings of the Castle Point Local Housing Needs Assessment 2023 (LHNA) to meet existing and future needs of the whole community, and reducing disparity	Will the site meet local thresholds for affordable housing and affordable home ownership?	Local Viability Study Local Housing Needs Assessment	Development delivers above 27% affordable housing	Development delivers 27% affordable housing	Development delivers less than 27% affordable housing	Development delivers no affordable housing	Where applicable	Non-residential proposals
15) To promote the efficient use of resources, including land and ensure the	Are utilities available on site? Criterion to be updated	Utility providers	Utilities are available	Appear to be no significant constraints	No utilities available	N/A	Where applicable	Where applicable

SA Objective	Site Criteria	Source	Significant Positive (++)	Positive (+)	Negative (-)	Significant Negative (--)	Uncertain Unknown (?)	No / negligible impact (0)
necessary infrastructure to support sustainable development	once relevant evidence base documents and assessments are progressed.							
	Does the site provide new, or redevelop existing infrastructure	Site proposals	N/A	Site provides new infrastructure	Site results in loss of infrastructure	N/A	Uncertain	Site replaces infrastructure
16)To improve the education and skill of the population	Is there a surplus of primary school places in nearby schools?	Commissioning School Places in Essex (per school: Forecast Surplus Deficit including adjustment for new housing). ECC Developer's Guide to Contributions 2023 (exemptions to school places for 1-bed flats)	Significant surplus of spaces in local area	Small surplus of spaces in local area	No surplus of spaces in local area	Significant shortage of spaces in the local area	For information only – Site would require additional place(s)	Site is not proposed for housing, or is specifically for 1-bed flats

SA Objective	Site Criteria	Source	Significant Positive (++)	Positive (+)	Negative (-)	Significant Negative (--)	Uncertain Unknown (?)	No / negligible impact (0)
	Is there a surplus of secondary school spaces in nearby secondary schools?	Commissioning School Places in Essex (per school: Forecast Surplus / Deficit including adjustment for new housing). ECC Developer's Guide to Contributions 2023 (exemptions to school places for 1-bed flats)	Significant surplus of spaces in local area	Small surplus of spaces in local area	No surplus of spaces in local area	Significant shortage of spaces in the local area	For information only – Site would require additional place(s)	Site would not require additional place(s). Where applicable. OR Site is not proposed for housing, or is specifically for 1-bed flats
	Is there a surplus of spaces in local Early Years and Childcare provision?	ECC preferred thresholds for new school provision. Early years and Childcare threshold – 0.09 additional places per new house and 0.045	Significant surplus of spaces in local area	Small surplus of spaces in local area	No surplus of spaces in local area	Significant shortage of spaces in the local area	For information only – Site would require additional place(s)	Site would not require additional place(s). Where applicable.

SA Objective	Site Criteria	Source	Significant Positive (++)	Positive (+)	Negative (-)	Significant Negative (--)	Uncertain Unknown (?)	No / negligible impact (0)
		additional spaces per new flats.						
17) To ensure sustainable employment provision and economic growth by improving efficiency, competitiveness and adaptability of the local economy and help people gain access to satisfying work appropriate to their skills, potential and place of residence	Is the site proposed for employment development / loss of employment land?	Draft Allocation	Site is proposed for employment	Site is proposed for mixed-use development	Proposal will see a loss of previously allocated employment land	N/A	Where applicable	Other uses
	Will there be a loss of employment land (housing allocations).	Draft Allocation	Site is not currently employment land	N/A	Site is partly currently employment land	Site is currently wholly employment land	Where applicable	Where applicable
18) To maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of town and retail centres	Is the proposal for a town centre location?	Draft Allocation	The proposal is for town centre functions and within a defined town centre	The proposal is for mixed-use development within a defined town centre	The site is for residential development in a defined town centre OR The proposal is for town centre functions that are not well related to the	N/A	Where applicable	N/A

SA Objective	Site Criteria	Source	Significant Positive (++)	Positive (+)	Negative (-)	Significant Negative (--)	Uncertain Unknown (?)	No / negligible impact (0)
					defined town centre			
	Does the proposal change the amount of retail floorspace in the primary shopping area?	Site proposal and GIS mapping	Proposal increases retail floorspace	N/A	N/A	Proposal reduces retail floorspace	Where applicable	Proposal maintains existing use of the same floorspace
	Does the proposal change the overall town centre floorspace?	Site proposal	Proposal increases town centre floorspace	N/A	N/A	Proposal reduces town centre floorspace	Unknown proposed mixed use	Proposal maintains existing use of the same floorspace
	Does the site support sufficient parking to ensure visitation to the centre?	Site proposal Parking surveys	Proposal increases parking provision	Proposal maintains existing parking provision	Proposal reduces parking provision	Proposal removes parking provision	Proposal relocates parking	Where applicable
	Does the site contribute to the public realm in the town centre or local centre?	Site proposal	N/A	Public realm improvements proposed	N/A	Site decreases public space within the centre	No public realm improvements proposed	Where applicable
	Will there be a net increase or	Site proposal	N/A	Proposal is for, or includes retail use	Site is currently for retail use and proposal	N/A	Where applicable	Where applicable

SA Objective	Site Criteria	Source	Significant Positive (++)	Positive (+)	Negative (-)	Significant Negative (--)	Uncertain Unknown (?)	No / negligible impact (0)
	loss of retail provision?				would see a loss of retail use			
19)To promote the sustainable management of waste	Is a household waste and recycling centre within a close proximity of the site?	GIS /aerial mapping	N/A	Within 1km	Beyond 1km	N/A	N/A	Where applicable
20)To ensure that the digital infrastructure available meets the needs of the current and future generations	Fibre broadband availability	Superfastess e.org interactive rollout map	Ultrafast in area adjacent to site (>100Mbps); or site greater than 30 units	Superfast in area adjacent to site – between 24Mbps and 100Mbps	Less than 24Mbps in area adjacent to site	No broadband coverage in area adjacent to site	Where applicable	Where applicable

Following the scoring of sites, mitigations will be identified to address negative impacts identified. These will be set out for each site, and where possible, incorporated into the Policies of the Draft Plan. The method for this is set out in Table 10 below.

Table 10: The Site Mitigation proforma

SA Objective	Example Initial Score	Mitigation added	Example Mitigated Score
1) To protect, conserve and enhance biodiversity (habitats, species, and ecosystems) and geodiversity within the Borough	++	Brief summary of the mitigation to be applied to the site through the Policies of the Plan.	++
2) To conserve and enhance water quality and resources, and ensure sustainable reuse of water to accommodate growth	+	Brief summary of the mitigation to be applied to the site through the Policies of the Plan.	++
3) To maintain, conserve and enhance the quality and local distinctiveness of the Borough's landscape character and townscapes	?	Brief summary of the mitigation to be applied to the site through the Policies of the Plan.	+
4) To protect, conserve and enhance land and soils and mineral resources, minimise the loss of agricultural land, whilst reducing land contamination	-	Brief summary of the mitigation to be applied to the site through the Policies of the Plan.	0
5) To contribute to the sustainable use of land	--	Brief summary of the mitigation to be applied to the site through the Policies of the Plan.	-
6) To maintain and enhance the Borough's cultural heritage assets and areas, assets of historical and archaeological importance and their settings	++	Brief summary of the mitigation to be applied to the site through the Policies of the Plan.	++
7) To reduce contributions to climatic change by adapting and responding to the implications of a changing climate	+	Brief summary of the mitigation to be applied to the site through the Policies of the Plan.	++
8) To adapt and respond to reduce vulnerability and increase resilience to extreme weather events and flooding which may be caused by climate change	?	Brief summary of the mitigation to be applied to the site through the Policies of the Plan.	+
9) To maintain and enhance air quality in the Borough, reducing contributions to climate change, and reduce noise pollution	-	Brief summary of the mitigation to be applied to the site through the Policies of the Plan.	0
10) To reduce the need to travel and promote and encourage the use of sustainable and active alternative methods of travel to motorised vehicles to reduce road traffic congestion and mitigate air pollution	--	Brief summary of the mitigation to be applied to the site through the Policies of the Plan.	-
11) To improve the quality, range, and accessibility to essential services, facilities	++	Brief summary of the mitigation to be applied to the site through the Policies of the Plan.	++
12) To reduce levels of deprivation and disparity, and social exclusion	+	Brief summary of the mitigation to be applied to the site through the Policies of the Plan.	++

SA Objective	Example Initial Score	Mitigation added	Example Mitigated Score
13)To improve the population's health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities	?	Brief summary of the mitigation to be applied to the site through the Policies of the Plan.	+
14) To provide appropriate, affordable and decent housing and accommodation in alignment with the findings of the Castle Point Local Housing Needs Assessment 2023 (LHNA) to meet existing and future needs of the whole community, and reducing disparity	-	Brief summary of the mitigation to be applied to the site through the Policies of the Plan.	0
15)To promote the efficient use of resources, including land and ensure the necessary infrastructure to support sustainable development	--	Brief summary of the mitigation to be applied to the site through the Policies of the Plan.	-
16)To improve the education and skill of the population	++	Brief summary of the mitigation to be applied to the site through the Policies of the Plan.	++
17) To ensure sustainable employment provision and economic growth by improving efficiency, competitiveness and adaptability of the local economy and help people gain access to satisfying work appropriate to their skills, potential and place of residence	+	Brief summary of the mitigation to be applied to the site through the Policies of the Plan.	++
18)To maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of town and retail centres	?	Brief summary of the mitigation to be applied to the site through the Policies of the Plan.	+
19)To promote the sustainable management of waste	-	Brief summary of the mitigation to be applied to the site through the Policies of the Plan.	0
20)To ensure that the digital infrastructure available meets the needs of the current and future generations	--	Brief summary of the mitigation to be applied to the site through the Policies of the Plan.	-

5.3

5.4 5.3 The Appraisal of Green Belt Site Options

The assessment of Green Belt Site Options differs from that of sites due to the scale of these areas. In arriving at the Draft Castle Point Plan, it will be important that the Reasonable Alternative options have been considered. This may include testing different numbers, and different combinations, of Green Belt sites, to understand what their sustainability implications would be. Each site considered as part of a Reasonable Alternative will be tested using the criteria set out in Table 11.

Table 11: The Green Belt Site Options SA Pro Forma

SA Objective	Site Criteria	Source	Significant Positive (++)	Positive (+)	Negative (-)	Significant Negative (--)	Uncertain Unknown (?)	No / negligible impact (0)
1) To protect, conserve and enhance biodiversity (habitats, species and ecosystems) and geodiversity within the Borough	Proximity of any: SSSIs, SPA and Ramsar sites (including impact risk zones)	GIS mapping	Site is not within or adjacent to an impact risk zone	Site is within an impact risk zone but is for a use that would not require consultation with Natural England	Site is adjacent to a SSSI, SPA or Ramsar site	Site is within a SSSI SPA or Ramsar site	Where Applicable Site is within a SSSI, SPA or Ramsar site impact risk zone and would require consultation with Natural England	Where Applicable
	Proximity to the Draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) Interventions	GIS mapping	Site is not defined as a site within the draft LNRS areas	Site has potential to contribute to LNRS in an urban opportunity area	Site is within an area defined by the draft LNRS	N/A	Where applicable	Where Applicable
	Ancient woodland	GIS mapping	N/A	Site is not located outside of an ancient woodland and 15m buffer area	Site is within 15m buffer area of an ancient woodland	Site is within an ancient woodland		Where Applicable
	Local Wildlife Sites	GIS mapping	N/A	Over 100m	Within 100m	On site	Where applicable	Where applicable
2) To conserve and enhance water quality and	Proximity of any water bodies	GIS mapping Aerial Mapping	N/A	Over 100m	Within 100m	On site	Where applicable	Where applicable

SA Objective	Site Criteria	Source	Significant Positive (++)	Positive (+)	Negative (-)	Significant Negative (--)	Uncertain Unknown (?)	No / negligible impact (0)
resources, and ensure sustainable reuse of water to accommodate growth		Site information						
3) To maintain, conserve and enhance the quality and local distinctiveness of the Borough's landscape character and townscapes	Will any Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) be affected/	GIS mapping	N/A	No TPOs on site	2 TPOs or less on site	3 or more TPOs on site	TPOs adjacent to site	Where applicable
	Site's contribution to existing landscape	Potential Green Belt Assessment	None	Minor	Strong	Very Strong	Moderate	N/A
	How contiguous with the urban area is the site?	GIS mapping	>75% of site boundary contiguous	>50% of site boundary contiguous	<50% of site boundary contiguous	<25% of site boundary contiguous	N/A	N/A
4) To protect, conserve and enhance land and soils and mineral resources, minimise the loss of agricultural land, whilst reducing land contamination	Is the site on contaminated land?	GIS mapping	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes / Potential Impact for information only, as commentary in site appraisals	Site is not on contaminated land
	Is the site within the mineral safeguarding area?	GIS mapping	N/A	Not in mineral safeguarding area	Within mineral safeguarding area	N/A	Site is partially in the mineral safeguarding area	Where applicable

SA Objective	Site Criteria	Source	Significant Positive (++)	Positive (+)	Negative (-)	Significant Negative (--)	Uncertain Unknown (?)	No / negligible impact (0)
	Agricultural Land Classification	Agricultural Land Classification (ALC)	N/A (no Grade 4 or 5 in the Plan Area)	Urban area / extension to an existing site / other land primarily in non-agricultural use	Grade 2	N/A (no Grade 1 in the Plan Area)	Grade 3	Where applicable
5)To contribute to the sustainable use of land	Is the site greenfield or brownfield?	Aerial mapping	100% Brownfield	Brownfield (approx. 75% plus)	Greenfield (approx.75% plus)	100% Greenfield	Approx. 50% brownfield / greenfield	Where applicable
6)To maintain and enhance the Borough's cultural heritage assets and areas, assets of historical and archaeological importance and their settings	Conservation Area	Heritage Record	Site not being within a Conservation Area	Site not being within a Conservation Area	Site within 100m of a Conservation Area	Site is within a Conservation Area	Uncertainty surrounding impacts	Where applicable
	Listed Buildings	Heritage Record	Site brings an "at risk" building off the register	More than 100m from a Listed Building	Site is within 100m of a listed building	Site contains a listed building	Uncertainty surrounding impacts	Where applicable
	Scheduled (Ancient) Monuments	Heritage Record	Site is more than 500m from a Scheduled Monument	Site is more than 100m from a Scheduled Monument	Site is less than 500m from a Scheduled Monument	Site is less than 100m from a Scheduled Monument	Uncertainty surrounding impacts	Where applicable
	Archaeology	Heritage Record	Site is not in the Archaeological consultation zone	N/A	N/A	Site is in the Archaeological consultation zone	Uncertainty surrounding impacts	Where applicable
	Is the site in the Essex Historic	Essex historic	N/A	Site is not within the Essex	Site is within the Essex historic	N/A	Site partially within Essex historic	Where applicable

SA Objective	Site Criteria	Source	Significant Positive (++)	Positive (+)	Negative (-)	Significant Negative (--)	Uncertain Unknown (?)	No / negligible impact (0)
	Landscape Area?	landscape assessment		historic landscape area	landscape area		landscape area	
7) To reduce contributions to climatic change by adapting and responding to the implications of a changing climate	There will not be a comparable level of information available to assess all sites against this objective – features that would reduce contributions to climate change would only be known at the proposal / application stage.							
8) To adapt and respond to reduce vulnerability and increase resilience to extreme weather events and flooding which may be caused by climate change	Would the site be located in an area of high / medium / low / very low risk of flooding from surface water?	EA mapping	Very low	Low	High	N/A	Medium Risk Or Site is on zone boundary Or Where applicable	Where applicable
	Is the site at risk from tidal flooding?	GIS mapping	Site is within Zone 1 (no flood risk)	Site contains a minimum of 80% Flood Zone 1	Site is within Zone 2	Site is within Zone 3a / 3b	Uncertain (to include commentary in appraisal)	Where applicable
	Is the site at risk from fluvial flooding?	GIS mapping	Site is within Zone 1 (no flood risk)	Site contains a minimum of 80% Flood Zone 1	Site is within Zone 2	Site is within Zone 3a / 3b	Uncertain (to include commentary in appraisal)	Where applicable
	Is the site located within 19m of	GIS mapping	N/A	Site is further than 19m from the sea defences	Site is within 19m of the sea defences	N/A	Part of the site falls within the 19m buffer	Where applicable

SA Objective	Site Criteria	Source	Significant Positive (++)	Positive (+)	Negative (-)	Significant Negative (--)	Uncertain Unknown (?)	No / negligible impact (0)
	sea defences?						zone of the sea defences	
9) To maintain and enhance air quality in the Borough, reducing contributions to climate change, and reduce noise pollution	Is the site close to an area identified with having poor air quality?	Essex Air Quality data GIS mapping	N/A	Nearest AQ monitor annual average lower than 30No2	Nearest AQ monitor annual average lower than 40No2	Nearest annual average monitor higher than 40No2	Where applicable	Where applicable
	Is the site within proximity to waste management facilities?	Allocations in the Adopted Waste Local Plan (2017)	Site is beyond 250m of an either existing or allocated site for a waste management facility	N/A	Site is within 250m of either an existing or proposed site allocated for a waste management facility	N/A	Where applicable	Where applicable
	Would the site be affected by noise?	GIS mapping	Site would not be affected by noise	Site would be affected by noise at < 55 dba	Site would be affected by noise at > 54-70dba	Site would be affected by noise at > 70dba	Part of the site would be affected by noise	Where applicable
	Is the site within proximity to a designated employment area?	GIS mapping	Site is beyond 250m of a designated employment site	Site is beyond 100m of a designated employment site	Site is within 250m of a designated employment site	Site is within 100m of a designated employment site	Where applicable	Where applicable
10) To reduce the need to travel and promote and encourage the use of sustainable and active	Access to bus stop	GIS mapping	Within 400m of a bus stop with at least one bus per hour	Within 800m of a bus stop with at least one bus per hour	Over 800m to a bus stop served with at least one bus per hour	N/A	Where applicable	Where applicable

SA Objective	Site Criteria	Source	Significant Positive (++)	Positive (+)	Negative (-)	Significant Negative (--)	Uncertain Unknown (?)	No / negligible impact (0)
alternative methods of travel to motorised vehicles to reduce road traffic congestion and mitigate air pollution	Does the site link existing routes?	Site proposals	Proposal would link surrounding areas along multiple axes	Proposal would link the surrounding areas along a single axis	Site only connects to nearby urban area	Site does not provide new connections to local areas	Diversion of public footpath or cycleway required	Where applicable
	Does the proposal provide mixed uses?	Site proposals	Site creates a new town centre or local centre and proposes mixed uses	Site proposes mixed uses	Site does not provide mixed uses	N/A	Where applicable	Where applicable
11) To improve the quality, range, and accessibility to essential services, facilities	Does the site provide safe highway access?	To be updated where specialist input available.	Existing site with suitable existing access	Adequate or good access off adequate or good standard of road. Not affected by safety issues	Poor access and / or road of poor standard. Likely to be subject to safety issues from surrounding uses incapable of mitigation	No access	Access poor but capable of being improved. Road of adequate or good standard. Likely to be affected by safety issues but capable of mitigation OR Unclear from information	Where applicable
	Is the site close to local services? (shops, community facilities,	GIS mapping	Site is within 400m of a town centre/ local centre/ retail park/ local services	Site is within 800m of a town centre/ local centre/ retail park/ local services	Site is further than 800m to a town centre/ local centre/ retail park/ local services	N/A	Some services within 400m or 800m of site	Where applicable

SA Objective	Site Criteria	Source	Significant Positive (++)	Positive (+)	Negative (-)	Significant Negative (--)	Uncertain Unknown (?)	No / negligible impact (0)
12) To reduce levels of deprivation and disparity, and social exclusion	Is the site close to employment opportunities ?	GIS mapping	Within 400m of town centre, local centre or a designated employment area	Within 800m of town centre, local centre or a designated employment area	More than 800m from a town centre, local centre or a designated employment area	N/A	Some employment opportunities provided outside of town centres, local centres or designated employment areas	Where applicable
13)To improve the population's health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities	Does the site meet Natural England's ANGSt? ANGSt recommends that everyone, wherever they live, should have an accessible natural greenspace: -of at least 2ha in size, no more than 300m (5 minutes' walk) from home; -at least 1 accessible 20ha site	GIS mapping	Site conforms to 4/4 of ANGSt criteria	Site conforms to 3/4 of ANGSt criteria	Site conforms to 1/4 of ANGSt criteria	Site conforms to none of the ANGSt criteria	Where applicable Site conforms to 2/4 of the ANGSt criteria	Non-residential allocations

SA Objective	Site Criteria	Source	Significant Positive (++)	Positive (+)	Negative (-)	Significant Negative (--)	Uncertain Unknown (?)	No / negligible impact (0)
	within 2km of home; -1 accessible 100ha site within 5km of home; And 1 accessible 500ha site within 10 minutes of home							
	Will the site see a loss of local open space?	GIS	Proposals include local open space	No loss of local open space	N/A	Loss of local open space	Uncertain	Where applicable
	Will the site provide new community use?	Allocated Use / existing uses	Proposals increase community uses on site	No loss of community use	N/A	Proposal reduces community uses in the area	Uncertain	Where applicable
	Is the site within close proximity of a GP surgery?	GIS mapping	Site is within 400m of a GP surgery	Site is within 800m of a GP surgery	Site is further than 800m to a GP surgery	N/A	Uncertain	Where applicable
	Does the site provide new GP floorspace?	Proposed allocation	N/A	Site provides new GP floorspace	Site removes GP floorspace	N/A	Uncertain	Where applicable
14) To provide appropriate, affordable and decent housing and	Will the site meet local thresholds for affordable housing and	Local Viability Study	Development delivers above 27% affordable housing	Development delivers 27% affordable housing	Development delivers less than 27% affordable housing	Development delivers no affordable housing	Where applicable	Non-residential proposals

SA Objective	Site Criteria	Source	Significant Positive (++)	Positive (+)	Negative (-)	Significant Negative (--)	Uncertain Unknown (?)	No / negligible impact (0)
accommodation in alignment with the findings of the Castle Point Local Housing Needs Assessment 2023 (LHNA) to meet existing and future needs of the whole community, and reducing disparity	affordable home ownership?	Local Housing Needs Assessment						
	Will the site deliver a range of types and sizes of new homes?	Local Viability Study Local Housing Needs Assessment Site proposals	Development delivers multiple tenures, and a balanced house size mix	Development delivers multiple tenure or a balanced house size mix	Development fails to deliver multiple tenures and house size mix	N/A	Where applicable	Non-residential proposals
15) To promote the efficient use of resources, including land and ensure the necessary infrastructure to support sustainable development	Are utilities available on site?	Utility providers	Utilities are available	Appear to be no significant constraints	No utilities available	N/A	Where applicable	Where applicable
	Does the site provide new, or redevelop existing infrastructure	Site proposals	N/A	Site provides new infrastructure	Site results in loss of infrastructure	N/A	Uncertain	Site replaces infrastructure

SA Objective	Site Criteria	Source	Significant Positive (++)	Positive (+)	Negative (-)	Significant Negative (--)	Uncertain Unknown (?)	No / negligible impact (0)
16) To improve the education and skill of the population	Is there a surplus of primary school places in nearby schools?	Commissioning School Places in Essex (per school: Forecast Surplus Deficit including adjustment for new housing). ECC Developer's Guide to Contributions 2023 (exemptions to school places for 1-bed flats)	Significant surplus of spaces in local area	Small surplus of spaces in local area	No surplus of spaces in local area	Significant shortage of spaces in the local area	For information only – Site would require additional place(s)	Site is not proposed for housing, or is specifically for 1-bed flats
	Does the site deliver a new school or early years provision	Site proposal	N/A	Yes	No	N/A	Uncertain	Site is not proposed for housing, or is specifically for 1-bed flats
	Is there a surplus of secondary school spaces in nearby secondary schools?	Commissioning School Places in Essex (per school: Forecast Surplus / Deficit)	Significant surplus of spaces in local area	Small surplus of spaces in local area	No surplus of spaces in local area	Significant shortage of spaces in the local area	For information only – Site would require additional place(s)	Site would not require additional place(s). Where applicable. OR Site is not

SA Objective	Site Criteria	Source	Significant Positive (++)	Positive (+)	Negative (-)	Significant Negative (--)	Uncertain Unknown (?)	No / negligible impact (0)
		including adjustment for new housing). ECC Developer's Guide to Contributions 2023 (exemptions to school places for 1-bed flats)						proposed for housing, or is specifically for 1-bed flats
	Is there a surplus of spaces in local Early Years and Childcare provision?	ECC preferred thresholds for new school provision. Early years and Childcare threshold – 0.09 additional places per new house and 0.045 additional spaces per new flats.	Significant surplus of spaces in local area	Small surplus of spaces in local area	No surplus of spaces in local area	Significant shortage of spaces in the local area	For information only – Site would require additional place(s)	Site would not require additional place(s). Where applicable.
17) To ensure sustainable employment provision and economic	Is the site proposed for employment development / loss of	Site proposal	Site is proposed for employment	Site is proposed for mixed-use development	Proposal will see a loss of previously allocated	N/A	Where applicable	Other uses

SA Objective	Site Criteria	Source	Significant Positive (++)	Positive (+)	Negative (-)	Significant Negative (--)	Uncertain Unknown (?)	No / negligible impact (0)
growth by improving efficiency, competitiveness and adaptability of the local economy and help people gain access to satisfying work appropriate to their skills, potential and place of residence	employment land?				employment land			
	Will there be a loss of employment land (housing allocations).	Site proposal	Site is not currently employment land	N/A	Site is partly currently employment land	Site is currently wholly employment land	Where applicable	Where applicable
18)To maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of town and retail centres	Does the proposal include a new centre?	Site proposal	The proposal includes a new centre	The site promotes excellent connectivity to an existing centre	The site does not include a new centre	The site does not create a new centre, and does not promote excellent connectivity to an existing centre.	Where applicable	N/A
	Would any new retail in the proposal threaten the function of nearby centres?	Site proposal Retail impact assessment	Proposal creates no impact	Proposal creates minimal impact	Proposal creates moderate impact	Proposal creates significant impact	Where applicable	Where applicable
19)To promote the	Is a household waste and	GIS /aerial mapping	N/A	Within 1km	Beyond 1km	N/A	N/A	Where applicable

SA Objective	Site Criteria	Source	Significant Positive (++)	Positive (+)	Negative (-)	Significant Negative (--)	Uncertain Unknown (?)	No / negligible impact (0)
sustainable management of waste	recycling centre within a close proximity of the site?							
20)To ensure that the digital infrastructure available meets the needs of the current and future generations	Fibre broadband availability	Superfastess e.org interactive rollout map	Ultrafast in area adjacent to site (>100Mbps); or site greater than 30 units	Superfast in area adjacent to site – between 24Mbps and 100Mbps	Less than 24Mbps in area adjacent to site	No broadband coverage in area adjacent to site	Where applicable	Where applicable

6. Initial Assessment of the Castle Point Plan's Reasonable Alternative Strategic Development Options

6.1 Introduction

The following sub-sections summarise the impacts highlighted within an interim appraisal of each of the Reasonable Alternatives within the emerging Castle Point Plan. This responds to an appraisal of the emerging Plan context, baseline conditions, and identified SA Objectives which the Council will be consulting on in early Summer 2024.

6.1.1 The Reasonable Alternatives

The emerging Castle Point Plan sets out six Borough-wide development strategy options – the alternative development scenarios:

1a – *Limit new development to the brownfield sites within the Urban Area*

1b – *Regenerate Designated Employment Areas within the urban area*

1c – *Increase density in the urban area*

2a – *Release a limited amount of Green Belt to meet local housing need*

2b – *Create a substantial new development area in NW of Thundersley*

3 – *Release significant Green Belt land to meet standard methodology housing need*

The options have been set out by Castle Point Borough Council in the preparation of the emerging Castle Point Plan. The options are not intended to be mutually exclusive, i.e., they could potentially form a combination of scenarios to meet identified housing and employment need.

Where the scenarios refer to the Urban Area, meaning the four towns of Benfleet, Canvey Island, Thundersley, and Hadleigh, as well as the village of Daws Heath. Anything outside the Urban Area is in the Green Belt.

It should be noted that the findings regarding significant effects contained within this section are indicative only at this stage and will need to be revised, and appraisal work revisited once a full suite of evidence base documents have been concluded.

The emerging Castle Point Plan consultation document sets out the Reasonable Alternatives to be considered in the plan-making process along with complementary themes both of which may conflict with the requirements of sustainable development of which the SA work will assess.

6.1.2 What assumptions are used in the assessment of the Reasonable Alternatives?

A total of 20 Sustainability Objectives have been identified for the appraisal of the emerging Castle Point Plan in this Report. General assumptions can be made at this interim stage in response to creating environmentally sustainable development and in the identification of potential effects (and their significance) across the 20 thematic Sustainability Objectives. The use of assumptions assists the identification of key differences between the emerging Plan's overall strategy and the Reasonable Alternatives. These are:

- Greenfield land (including the Green Belt) is more peripheral to existing centres, and therefore more distanced from existing services.
- Any development in the Green Belt will have some degree of harm in consideration of the designation of the Green Belt and the purpose of the Green Belt in the first instance.
- The bulk of undeveloped land will be comparably more constrained in respect of available existing infrastructure than development on previously developed land, or within infill development / regeneration opportunities in existing settlements.
- The land on the mainland area is varied in terms of topography and landscape, and these features act to create an attractive and green environment, and also form the separation between the three towns. To this extent, any development of Greenfield land can be expected to have a degree of landscape harm.
- As per the Transport Evidence for the withdrawn Plan, background growth alone will result in some junctions suffering congestion issues. Congestion management and the management of the impacts of congestion on air quality are therefore highly important in the delivery of new homes and there can be little differentiation between options as a result.

6.1.3 The Significant Effects of creating environmentally sustainable development and Reasonable Alternatives

Description of 'Significant Effects'

The strength of impacts can vary dependant on the relevance of the Reasonable Alternative content to certain sustainability objectives or themes. Where the Reasonable Alternatives have been appraised against the Sustainability Objectives the basis for making judgements within the assessment is identified within the following key:

Possible impact / effect	Basis for judgement – description of effect
++	Strong prospect of there being significant positive impacts
+	Strong prospect of there being minor positive impacts
?	Possibility of either positive or negative impacts, or general uncertainty
0	No impact
N/A	Not applicable to the scope or context of the appraised content
-	Strong prospect of there being minor negative impacts and mitigation would be possible
--	Strong prospect of there being significant negative impacts with mitigation unlikely to be possible (pending further investigation)

Significant Effects

Table 10: Significant effects of Option 1a

Option 1a: <i>Limit new development to brownfield sites within the Urban Area</i>		
Sustainability Objective	Possible Impact / Effect	Commentary
1 To conserve and enhance biodiversity (habitats, species and ecosystems) and geodiversity within the Borough	++	For this scenario (as with 1b and 1c) it can be assumed that effects would be significantly positive should development be limited to urban areas outside the Green Belt. Impacts are generally uncertain however, due to the presence of wildlife designations and protected species / habitats being site specific and present throughout the Borough. Urban greening features within new developments can contribute to enhancing biodiversity through site and building design, thus making space for nature within the built environment.
2 To conserve and enhance water quality and resources.	?	The scale of development that would come forward under any of the six scenarios would result in an increased demand for water consumption; however, it is possible that new development would be designed and built to high standards of efficiency. The spatial distribution of development will not have significant impacts on water availability. There are, however, uncertain impacts at this stage of the Plan taking into consideration that Castle Point falls within a water stressed region with a low average rainfall.
3 To conserve and enhance the quality and local distinctiveness of the Borough's landscape character and townscapes	+	Although there is an element of uncertainty with this scenario, there are likely to be minor positive effects with regard to the requirement of good design meeting national policy requirements. New development within the urban area has the potential to enhance the townscape, particularly on disused brownfield sites.

Option 1a: Limit new development to brownfield sites within the Urban Area		
Sustainability Objective	Possible Impact / Effect	Commentary
		<p>Coalescence - the effects of this alternative approach would be comparatively positive in regard to coalescence, with development focused within existing urban areas outside the Green Belt.</p> <p>Overall, this scenario is expected to have minor positive effects.</p>
4	To conserve and enhance soil and mineral resources.	<p>++</p> <p>There are no minerals extraction sites or deposits safeguarded by the Essex Minerals Plan in the borough.</p> <p>Development in the urban area and in particular on brownfield sites is considered to have significant positive effects for this objective as it re-uses brownfield sites.</p>
5	To contribute to the sustainable use of land.	<p>++</p> <p>The NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and supporting infrastructure in a sustainable manner.</p> <p>As with option 1c, option 1a is not expected to impact local landscapes e.g., the limited amount of historic woodland and green / blue spaces. Development in the urban area where there are existing services and facilities, and in particular on brownfield sites is considered to have significant positive effects for this objective.</p>
6	To maintain and enhance the borough's cultural heritage assets and areas, assets of historical and archaeological importance and their settings.	<p>?</p> <p>All new development has the potential to have an impact on the historic environment, both directly and indirectly. Specific effects, including the extent to which new development may enhance the historic environment, will be dependent on the design and layout of specific proposals.</p> <p>Castle Point has two Conservation Areas (South Benfleet and Florence Gardens). Although locally listed assets have been identified, there is generally only a small number of Listed Buildings, and as such the effects of intensification are likely to be minimal. Uncertain impacts are highlighted in the absence of site specifics for urban intensification.</p> <p>Whilst risks of impacts have been identified, any potential impacts from development have the opportunity to be mitigated through good design and safeguard from cultural loss.</p>
7	To reduce contributions to climatic change.	<p>++</p> <p>There are close linkages between vehicle use and associated C02 emissions, which contributes towards climate change, in addition to poor air quality. Embodied carbon, i.e., C02 emissions from production of materials and their transportation in manufacturing also contributes to climate change. Carbon use is however, reducing</p>

Option 1a: Limit new development to brownfield sites within the Urban Area		
Sustainability Objective	Possible Impact / Effect	Commentary
		<p>due to sustainable transport patterns and more efficient technology.</p> <p>The new Future Homes Standard (Building Regulations) should ensure that all new homes built from 2025 will produce 75-80% less carbon. The Council could consider introducing policies into the new Plan to support this further but would need to consider impacts on development viability.</p> <p>All the growth options (in combination) will distribute growth to the urban areas. Therefore, all six scenarios could impact on air quality, but it is uncertain to what degree the impact may have. There are no existing Air Quality Management Areas in the borough. Development in the urban areas are more likely to have adverse effects on air pollution than the other alternative Green Belt scenarios.</p> <p>Mitigation to reduce impacts could include new or enhanced active travel infrastructure and sustainable public transport to encourage a move away from the use of the private vehicle. However, generally urban areas have good access to public transport and as various services and facilities are within proximity of one another, can be easily accessed via walking and cycling. The range of services and facilities also helps minimise reliance on the private car to travel elsewhere to reach certain amenities.</p> <p>Option 1a presents the lowest scale of development, and which will be mixed use compared to the alternatives.</p> <p>Overall, there are significant positive effects in relation to this objective.</p>
8	To reduce vulnerability and increase resilience to extreme weather events and flooding which may be caused by climate change.	<p>Flooding - Castle Point is located on the northern coast of the Thames Estuary and as such is generally at high risk of flooding due in particular to rising sea levels and more intense rainfall. There is, however, substantial tidal flooding defences, particularly to Canvey Island. There is a risk of flooding in the urban areas generally from surface water due to more intense rainfall.</p> <p>Canvey, Hadleigh Marshes and South Benfleet are in the higher flood risk zone 3.</p> <p>Surface water flood risk - impacts regarding flood risk are entirely site specific, leading to uncertain effects in the absence of specific proposals regarding increased intensification.</p>

Option 1a: Limit new development to brownfield sites within the Urban Area		
Sustainability Objective	Possible Impact / Effect	Commentary
		<p><u>Fluvial and tidal flood risk</u> - Impacts regarding flood risk are entirely site specific, leading to uncertain effects in the absence of specific proposals regarding increased intensification.</p> <p>As with option 1b and 1c, and options 2a,2b and 3, most development is directed to the urban area. Urbanisation reduces the ability of land to absorb water and so the risk of flooding may increase in more urban areas. Development in the urban areas could result in an increased flood risk – particularly if development places pressure on existing areas of green space that could otherwise help absorb flood water.</p> <p>Mitigations, e.g., SUDs can be introduced to the design of new development to safeguard residents, buildings and infrastructure from flooding, reducing risks of flooding. However, national policy guidance provides for development to be steered to areas with the lowest flood risk in the first instance.</p> <p><u>Buildings and public spaces</u> – this objective also considers whether buildings and public spaces will respond to the effects of a changing climate (i.e., ventilation, shading and landscaping). Such design considerations are beyond the scope of this assessment and will be considered by the SA later in the plan-making process.</p> <p>Overall, option 1a as with the alternative options 1b, 1c, 2a and 2b are expected to have a minor negative effect in relation to this objective.</p>
9	To maintain and enhance air quality in the Borough and reduce noise pollution.	<p><u>Air quality and congestion</u> – as identified in the alternative options similar impacts can be expected to arise from option 3. Air quality effects can be expected to be negative in relation to all options as a result of the level of growth within the Plan area, the small size of Castle Point and the presence of many strategic roads in the Borough.</p> <p>All the growth options (in combination) will distribute growth to the urban areas. Therefore, all six scenarios could impact on air quality, but it is uncertain to what degree the impact may have. There are no existing Air Quality Management Areas in the borough. Development in the urban areas are more likely to have adverse effects on air pollution than the other alternative Green Belt scenarios.</p> <p>There are close linkages between vehicle use and associated CO2 emissions, which contributes towards poor air quality. However, sustainable transport patterns and more efficient technology</p>

Option 1a: <i>Limit new development to brownfield sites within the Urban Area</i>		
Sustainability Objective	Possible Impact / Effect	Commentary
		<p>will mitigate potential poor air quality arising from new development.</p> <p>The new Future Homes Standard (Building Regulations) should ensure that all new homes built from 2025 will produce 75-80% less carbon which will also contribute to mitigating poor air quality. The Council could consider introducing policies into the new Plan to support this further but would need to consider impacts on development viability.</p> <p>Further mitigation to reduce impacts could include new or enhanced active travel infrastructure and sustainable public transport to encourage a move away from the use of the private vehicle. However, generally urban areas have good access to public transport and as various services and facilities are within proximity of one another, can be easily accessed via walking and cycling. The range of services and facilities also helps minimise reliance on the private car to travel elsewhere to reach certain amenities.</p> <p><u>Noise</u> - the small size of Castle Point and the prevalence of strategic roads ensure that noise related impacts can be expected to be experienced from any development sites, pending specific circumstances. Benfleet and Canvey Island in particular experience between 55-75db. Although no specific impacts are identified for this alternative, mitigation can be ensured for all options on a case by case basis and in line with the Plan's policy content.</p> <p>Overall, minor negative impacts are expected in relation to this objective.</p>
10	To promote and encourage the use of sustainable methods of travel.	<p>Option 1a, as with option 1b and 1c steers most development to the urban area where there is likely to be good access to public transport, and as various services and facilities are within proximity of one another, can be easily accessed via walking and cycling.</p> <p>++</p> <p>The range of services and facilities helps minimise reliance on the private car to travel elsewhere to reach certain amenities. As such, the potential minor negative effects are mixed with significant positive effects.</p> <p>This scenario is therefore expected to have significant positive effects.</p>
11	To ensure accessibility to services.	<p>++</p> <p><u>Community services and facilities</u> - due to continued pressure from many infrastructure providers to centralise services and facilities into fewer larger hubs, access to community facilities,</p>

Option 1a: <i>Limit new development to brownfield sites within the Urban Area</i>		
Sustainability Objective	Possible Impact / Effect	Commentary
		<p>services and healthcare is more viable in urban areas. As such, focusing most new development in the urban areas, i.e., the towns and local service centres would likely achieve good levels of access for new residents to existing services and facilities. Any improvements delivered as part of new development or as a result of an increase in the local population would also increase accessibility and mitigate overloading of services.</p> <p>With this option there is potential for services to be located at ground floor level improving accessibility and contributing to active frontages in the built environment.</p> <p>Growing town centres can improve accessibility to services which can be expected to be better realised through this alternative in consideration of the Borough as an isolated entity.</p> <p>In comparison to the alternatives, there can still be expected to be multiple trips outside the Plan area for services in Southend and Basildon, however small day-to-day trips to local services will be maximised through an intensification of growth in urban areas.</p> <p>Overall, with regard to access to community services and facilities this scenario is expected to have significant positive effects in relation to this objective, and potentially ensures more equal access to facilities and infrastructure for all.</p> <p><u>Highways access</u> - the impacts of options 2a and 2b can reasonably be expected to apply should any additional land within the Green Belt be released for housing development. Although access arrangements may already be in place for any future allocated sites in urban areas (and brownfield sites) it can be expected that car movements and the suitability of arrangements will need some retrofitting should intensification at the scale required be forthcoming. Impacts are deemed uncertain at this stage as impacts can only be realised on a site by site and proposal specific basis.</p>
12	To reduce poverty and social exclusion.	<p>+</p> <p>Contributes towards meeting housing need including affordable housing need (but not in full) in the urban areas where there are existing services, potentially avoiding the need to travel and associated costs.</p> <p>Minor positive effects are therefore expected in relation to this objective.</p>

Option 1a: Limit new development to brownfield sites within the Urban Area		
Sustainability Objective	Possible Impact / Effect	Commentary
13	To improve the population's health and reduce health inequalities.	<p>This option presents opportunities for development of life time homes due to an increase in the urban density (but could be limited), enabling occupants to remain in their homes as they age or become disabled. It also enables good accessibility and enhancement through new development to health services and other community facilities which are generally located in urban areas.</p> <p>Many of the open spaces in the borough are located in or at the edge of urban areas. This option allows good access to these open spaces, which contributes to residents physical and mental wellbeing.</p> <p>This option can be expected to have minor positive impacts in relation to this objective.</p>
14	To provide appropriate housing and accommodation to meet existing and future needs of the whole community.	<p>The Council has an identified local housing need of 5,100 over the Plan period 2023 – 2043.</p> <p>Option 1a contributes towards meeting local housing need (but not in full) in the urban areas offering a less positive effect . Option 1a in combination with the alternative options (2a and 2b) would offer a more positive effect in regard to meeting the full housing need.</p> <p>Minor negative impacts are expected with this option in relation to this objective.</p>
15	To promote the efficient use of resources and ensure the necessary infrastructure to support sustainable development.	<p>The NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and supporting infrastructure in a sustainable manner.</p> <p>Development in the urban area and in particular on brownfield sites is considered to have significant positive effects for this objective.</p>
16	To improve the education and skills of the population.	<p>This option in combination would require any suitable development to contribute towards any extra requirement of provision of education and / or training.</p> <p>This option has the potential for opportunities on mixed use sites for facilities to improve skills and training.</p> <p>Minor positive effects are expected in relation to this objective.</p>
17	To ensure sustainable employment provision and economic growth.	<p>The EDNA identifies an opportunity to deliver digital / cultural / creative industries within mixed-use town centre environments, which may conflict with urban residential intensification but broadly speaking would ensure that residential and</p>

Option 1a: Limit new development to brownfield sites within the Urban Area		
Sustainability Objective	Possible Impact / Effect	Commentary
		<p>employment opportunities are in close proximity to each other.</p> <p>Development would be focused within existing centres and Greenfield land outside the Green Belt, which would be comparably closer to existing centres and employment areas.</p> <p>Overall, option 1a in combination is considered to have minor positive effects in relation to this objective.</p>
18	To maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of town and retail centres.	<p>++</p> <p>All the development scenarios are likely to have positive effects including the promotion of employment opportunities in the borough's town centres, particularly the option 1a, 1b and 1c scenarios where most development would be steered to creating significant positive effects in relation to this objective.</p>
19	To promote the sustainable management of waste	<p>?</p> <p>New development as part of all scenarios will result in the use of raw materials and the generation of waste, both in construction and operation; however, this will not be influenced by the broad spatial distribution of development. Waste management practices are largely dependent on peoples' behaviour and the design of development. Therefore, it is uncertain as to the effects of development in relation to this objective.</p>
20	To ensure that the digital infrastructure available meets the needs of current and future generations.	<p>+</p> <p>This option presents opportunities for development to enhance the availability of digital access across the borough for both residents and employment / commercial purposes. It also enables good accessibility and enhancement to online health services and other community services.</p> <p>This option can be expected to have minor positive impacts in relation to this objective.</p>

Table 11: Significant effects of Option 1b

Option 1b: Regenerate Designated Employment Areas within the urban area			
Sustainability Objective		Possible Impact / Effect	Commentary
1	To conserve and enhance biodiversity (habitats, species and ecosystems) and geodiversity within the Borough	++	<p>For this scenario (as with 1a and 1c) it can be assumed that effects would be significantly positive should development be limited to urban areas outside the Green Belt. Impacts are generally uncertain however, due to the presence of wildlife designations and protected species / habitats being site specific and present throughout the Borough.</p> <p>Urban greening features within new developments can contribute to enhancing biodiversity through site and building design, thus making space for nature within the built environment.</p>
2	To conserve and enhance water quality and resources.	?	<p>The scale of development that would come forward under any of the six scenarios would result in an increased demand for water consumption; however, it is possible that new development would be designed and built to high standards of efficiency. The spatial distribution of development will not have significant impacts on water availability.</p> <p>There are, however, uncertain impacts at this stage of the Plan taking into consideration that Castle Point falls within a water stressed region with a low average rainfall.</p>
3	To conserve and enhance the quality and local distinctiveness of the Borough's landscape character and townscapes	+	<p>Although there is an element of uncertainty with this scenario, there are likely to be minor positive effects with regard to the requirement of good design meeting national policy requirements. New development within the urban area has the potential to enhance the townscape, particularly on disused brownfield sites.</p> <p>Coalescence - the effects of this alternative approach would be comparatively positive in regard to coalescence, with development focused within existing urban areas outside the Green Belt.</p> <p>Overall, this scenario is expected to have minor positive effects.</p>
4	To conserve and enhance soil and mineral resources.	++	<p>There are no minerals extraction sites or deposits safeguarded by the Essex Minerals Plan in the borough.</p> <p>Development in the urban area and in particular on brownfield sites is considered to have significant positive effects for this objective.</p>

Option 1b: Regenerate Designated Employment Areas within the urban area

Sustainability Objective		Possible Impact / Effect	Commentary
5	To contribute to the sustainable use of land.	?	<p>The NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and supporting infrastructure in a sustainable manner.</p> <p>Unlike option 1a and 1c, there is a degree of uncertainty to the effects of option 1b with regard to regeneration of designated employment areas and what this potentially presents for sustainable communities with regard to transport and accessibility to services and facilities.</p>
6	To maintain and enhance the borough's cultural heritage assets and areas, assets of historical and archaeological importance and their settings.	?	<p>All new development has the potential to have an impact on the historic environment, both directly and indirectly. Specific effects, including the extent to which new development may enhance the historic environment, will be dependent on the design and layout of specific proposals.</p> <p>Castle Point has two Conservation Areas (South Benfleet and Florence Gardens). Although locally listed assets have been identified, there is generally only a small number of Listed Buildings, and as such the effects of intensification are likely to be minimal. Uncertain impacts are highlighted in the absence of site specifics for urban intensification.</p> <p>Whilst risks of impacts have been identified, any potential impacts from development have the opportunity to be mitigated through good design and safeguard from cultural loss.</p>
7	To reduce contributions to climatic change.	+	<p>There are close linkages between vehicle use and associated CO2 emissions, which contributes towards climate change, in addition to poor air quality. Embodied carbon, i.e., CO2 emissions from production of materials and their transportation in manufacturing also contributes to climate change. Carbon use is however, reducing due to sustainable transport patterns and more efficient technology.</p> <p>The new Future Homes Standard (Building Regulations) should ensure that all new homes built from 2025 will produce 75-80% less carbon. The Council could consider introducing policies into the new Plan to support this further but would need to consider impacts on development viability.</p> <p>All the growth options (in combination) will distribute growth to the urban areas. Therefore, all six scenarios could impact on air quality, but it is uncertain to what degree the impact may have. There are no existing Air Quality Management</p>

Option 1b: Regenerate Designated Employment Areas within the urban area

Sustainability Objective		Possible Impact / Effect	Commentary
			<p>Areas in the borough. Development in the urban areas are more likely to have adverse effects on air pollution than the other alternative Green Belt scenarios.</p> <p>Mitigation to reduce impacts could include new or enhanced active travel infrastructure and sustainable public transport to encourage a move away from the use of the private vehicle. However, generally urban areas have good access to public transport and as various services and facilities are within proximity of one another, can be easily accessed via walking and cycling. The range of services and facilities also helps minimise reliance on the private car to travel elsewhere to reach certain amenities</p> <p>Option 1b presents the second lowest scale of development, and with scope for mixed use compared to the Green Belt alternatives.</p> <p>Overall, there are minor positive effects in relation to this objective.</p>
8	To reduce vulnerability and increase resilience to extreme weather events and flooding which may be caused by climate change.	--	<p><u>Flooding</u> - Castle Point is located on the northern coast of the Thames Estuary and as such is generally at high risk of flooding due in particular to rising sea levels and more intense rainfall. There is, however, substantial tidal flooding defences, particularly to Canvey Island. There is a risk of flooding in the urban areas generally from surface water due to more intense rainfall.</p> <p>Canvey, Hadleigh Marshes and South Benfleet are in the higher flood risk zone 3.</p> <p><u>Surface water flood risk</u> - impacts regarding flood risk are entirely site specific, leading to uncertain effects in the absence of specific proposals regarding increased intensification.</p> <p><u>Fluvial and tidal flood risk</u> - Impacts regarding flood risk are entirely site specific, leading to uncertain effects in the absence of specific proposals regarding increased intensification.</p> <p>As with option 1a and 1c, and options 2a, 2b and 3, most development is directed to the urban area. Urbanisation reduces the ability of land to absorb water and so the risk of flooding may increase in more urban areas. Development in the urban areas could result in an increased flood risk – particularly if development places pressure on existing areas of green space that could otherwise help absorb flood water.</p>

Option 1b: Regenerate Designated Employment Areas within the urban area

Sustainability Objective		Possible Impact / Effect	Commentary
			<p>Mitigations, e.g., SUDs can be introduced to the design of new development to safeguard residents, buildings and infrastructure from flooding, reducing risks of flooding. However, national policy guidance provides for development to be steered to areas with the lowest flood risk in the first instance.</p> <p><u>Buildings and public spaces</u> – this objective also considers whether buildings and public spaces will respond to the effects of a changing climate (i.e., ventilation, shading and landscaping). Such design considerations are beyond the scope of this assessment and will be considered by the SA later in the plan-making process.</p> <p>Overall, option 1b is expected to have a significant negative effect in relation to this objective due to a higher scale of development.</p>
9	To maintain and enhance air quality in the Borough and reduce noise pollution.	?	<p><u>Air quality and congestion</u> – as identified in the alternative options similar impacts can be expected to arise from option 3. Air quality effects can be expected to be negative in relation to all options as a result of the level of growth within the Plan area, the small size of Castle Point and the presence of many strategic roads in the Borough.</p> <p>All the growth options (in combination) will distribute growth to the urban areas. Therefore, all six scenarios could impact on air quality, but it is uncertain to what degree the impact may have. There are no existing Air Quality Management Areas in the borough. Development in the urban areas are more likely to have adverse effects on air pollution than the other alternative Green Belt scenarios.</p> <p>There are close linkages between vehicle use and associated CO2 emissions, which contributes towards poor air quality. However, sustainable transport patterns and more efficient technology will mitigate potential poor air quality arising from new development.</p> <p>The new Future Homes Standard (Building Regulations) should ensure that all new homes built from 2025 will produce 75-80% less carbon which will also contribute to mitigating poor air quality. The Council could consider introducing policies into the new Plan to support this further but would need to consider impacts on development viability.</p>

Option 1b: Regenerate Designated Employment Areas within the urban area

Sustainability Objective		Possible Impact / Effect	Commentary
			<p>Further mitigation to reduce impacts could include new or enhanced active travel infrastructure and sustainable public transport to encourage a move away from the use of the private vehicle. However, generally urban areas have good access to public transport and as various services and facilities are within proximity of one another, can be easily accessed via walking and cycling. The range of services and facilities also helps minimise reliance on the private car to travel elsewhere to reach certain amenities.</p> <p>This option presents the potential for a reduction in employment uses and therefore a potential reduction in HGV trips. However, there is a degree of uncertainty with this.</p> <p><u>Noise</u> - The small size of Castle Point and the prevalence of strategic roads ensure that noise related impacts can be expected to be experienced from any development sites, pending specific circumstances. Benfleet and Canvey Island in particular experience between 55-75db. Although no specific impacts are identified for this alternative, mitigation can be ensured for all options on a case by case basis and in line with the Plan's policy content.</p> <p>Overall, it is uncertain as to the degree of impact option 1b will have in relation to this objective.</p>
10	To promote and encourage the use of sustainable methods of travel.	++	<p>Option 1b, as with option 1a and 1c steers most development to the urban area where there is likely to be good access to public transport, and as various services and facilities are within proximity of one another, can be easily accessed via walking and cycling.</p> <p>The range of services and facilities helps minimise reliance on the private car to travel elsewhere to reach certain amenities. As such, the potential minor negative effects are mixed with significant positive effects.</p> <p>This scenario is therefore expected to have significant positive effects.</p>
11	To ensure accessibility to services.	++	<p><u>Community services and facilities</u> - due to continued pressure from many infrastructure providers to centralise services and facilities into fewer larger hubs, access to community facilities, services and healthcare is more viable in urban areas. As such, focusing most new development in the urban areas, i.e., the towns and local service centres would likely achieve good levels of access for new residents to existing services</p>

Option 1b: Regenerate Designated Employment Areas within the urban area

Sustainability Objective		Possible Impact / Effect	Commentary
			<p>and facilities. Any improvements delivered as part of new development or as a result of an increase in the local population would also increase accessibility and mitigate overloading of services.</p> <p>With this option there is potential for services to be located at ground floor level improving accessibility and contributing to active frontages in the built environment.</p> <p>Growing town centres can improve accessibility to services which can be expected to be better realised through this alternative in consideration of the Borough as an isolated entity.</p> <p>In comparison to the alternatives, there can still be expected to be multiple trips outside the Plan area for services in Southend and Basildon, however small day-to-day trips to local services will be maximised through an intensification of growth in urban areas.</p> <p>Overall, with regard to access to community services and facilities this scenario is expected to have significant positive effects in relation to this objective, and potentially ensures more equal access to facilities and infrastructure for all.</p> <p><u>Highways access</u> - the impacts of options 2a and 2b can reasonably be expected to apply should any additional land within the Green Belt be released for housing development. Although access arrangements may already be in place for any future allocated sites in urban areas (and brownfield sites) it can be expected that car movements and the suitability of arrangements will need some retrofitting should intensification at the scale required be forthcoming. Impacts are deemed uncertain at this stage as impacts can only be realised on a site by site and proposal specific basis.</p>
12	To reduce poverty and social exclusion.	++	<p>Contributes towards meeting full local housing need in the urban areas where there are existing services, potentially avoiding the need to travel and associated costs.</p> <p>Significant positive impacts are therefore expected in relation to this objective.</p>
13	To improve the population's health and reduce health inequalities.	+	<p>This option presents opportunities for development of life time homes due to an increase in the urban density, enabling occupants to remain in their homes as they age or become disabled. It also enables good accessibility and</p>

Option 1b: Regenerate Designated Employment Areas within the urban area

Sustainability Objective		Possible Impact / Effect	Commentary
			<p>enhancement through new development to health services and other community facilities which are generally located in urban areas.</p> <p>Many of the open spaces in the borough are located in or at the edge of urban areas. This option allows good access to these open spaces, which contributes to residents physical and mental wellbeing.</p> <p>This option can be expected to have minor positive impacts in relation to this objective.</p>
14	To provide appropriate housing and accommodation to meet existing and future needs of the whole community.	-	<p>The Council has an identified local housing need of 5,100 over the Plan period 2023 – 2043.</p> <p>Option 1b contributes towards meeting local housing need (but not in full) in the urban areas offering a less positive effect. Option 1b in combination with the alternative options (2a and 2b) would offer a more positive effect in regard to meeting the full housing need.</p> <p>Minor negative impacts are expected with this option in relation to this objective.</p>
15	To promote the efficient use of resources and ensure the necessary infrastructure to support sustainable development.	++	<p>The NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and supporting infrastructure in a sustainable manner.</p> <p>Development in the urban area and in particular on brownfield sites is considered to have significant positive effects for this objective.</p>
16	To improve the education and skills of the population.	-	<p>This option presents the loss of employment land and consequential loss of jobs which therefore inhibits opportunities for improving skills and training.</p> <p>This option in combination would require any suitable development to contribute towards any extra requirement of provision of education and / or training.</p> <p>Minor negative effects are expected in relation to this objective.</p>
17	To ensure sustainable employment provision and economic growth.	--	<p>The EDNA identifies an opportunity to deliver digital / cultural / creative industries within mixed-use town centre environments, which may conflict with urban residential intensification but broadly speaking would ensure that residential and employment opportunities are in close proximity to each other.</p> <p>Option 1b proposes to regenerate designated employment areas which would result in a loss of</p>

Option 1b: Regenerate Designated Employment Areas within the urban area		
Sustainability Objective	Possible Impact / Effect	Commentary
		<p>employment opportunities, as well as training and skills enhancement.</p> <p>Significant negative effects are in relation to this objective.</p>
18	++	All the development scenarios are likely to have positive effects including the promotion of employment opportunities in the borough's town centres, particularly the option 1a, 1b and 1c scenarios where most development would be steered to creating significant positive effects in relation to this objective.
19	?	New development as part of all scenarios will result in the use of raw materials and the generation of waste, both in construction and operation; however, this will not be influenced by the broad spatial distribution of development. Waste management practices are largely dependent on peoples' behaviour and the design of development. Therefore, it is uncertain as to the effects of development in relation to this objective.
20	+	<p>This option presents opportunities for development to enhance the availability of digital access across the borough for both residents and employment / commercial purposes. It also enables good accessibility and enhancement to online health services and other community services.</p> <p>This option can be expected to have minor positive impacts in relation to this objective.</p>

Table 12: Significant effects of Option 1c

Option 1c: Increase density in the urban area		
Sustainability Objective	Possible Impact / Effect	Commentary
1	++	<p>For this scenario (as with 1a and 1b) it can be assumed that effects would be significantly positive should development be limited to urban areas outside the Green Belt. Impacts are generally uncertain however, due to the presence of wildlife designations and protected species / habitats being site specific and present throughout the Borough.</p> <p>Urban greening features within new developments can contribute to enhancing biodiversity through site and building design, thus</p>

Option 1c: Increase density in the urban area

Option 1c: Increase density in the urban area		
Sustainability Objective	Possible Impact / Effect	Commentary
		making space for nature within the built environment.
2	To conserve and enhance water quality and resources.	<p style="text-align: center;">?</p> <p>The scale of development that would come forward under any of the six scenarios would result in an increased demand for water consumption; however, it is possible that new development would be designed and built to high standards of efficiency. The spatial distribution of development will not have significant impacts on water availability.</p> <p>There are, however, uncertain impacts at this stage of the Plan taking into consideration that Castle Point falls within a water stressed region with a low average rainfall.</p>
3	To conserve and enhance the quality and local distinctiveness of the Borough's landscape character and townscapes	<p style="text-align: center;">--</p> <p>Whereas the release of Green Belt land would not be apparent, the impacts on townscape can be assumed as being potentially negative through higher densities and inappropriate development. At the scale required to meet the Standard Methodology housing need without the release of Green Belt, 'high rise' flatted development may be required. However, development within the urban area has the potential to enhance the townscape, particularly on disused brownfield sites.</p> <p>Coalescence - the effects of this alternative approach would be comparatively positive in regard to coalescence, with development focused within existing urban areas outside the Green Belt.</p> <p>Overall, this scenario is expected to have significant negative effects in relation to this objective on the borough's townscape.</p>
4	To conserve and enhance soil and mineral resources.	<p style="text-align: center;">++</p> <p>There are no minerals extraction sites or deposits safeguarded by the Essex Minerals Plan in the borough.</p> <p>Development in the urban area and in particular on brownfield sites is considered to have significant positive effects for this objective.</p>
5	To contribute to the sustainable use of land.	<p style="text-align: center;">++</p> <p>The NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and supporting infrastructure in a sustainable manner.</p> <p>As with option 1a, option 1c is not expected to impact local landscapes e.g., the limited amount of historic woodland and green / blue spaces. Development in the urban area where there are existing services and facilities, and in particular on brownfield sites is considered to have significant positive effects for this objective.</p>

Option 1c: Increase density in the urban area

Sustainability Objective		Possible Impact / Effect	Commentary
6	To maintain and enhance the borough's cultural heritage assets and areas, assets of historical and archaeological importance and their settings.	-	<p>All new development has the potential to have an impact on the historic environment, both directly and indirectly. Specific effects, including the extent to which new development may enhance the historic environment, will be dependent on the design and layout of specific proposals.</p> <p>Castle Point has two Conservation Areas (South Benfleet and Florence Gardens). Although locally listed assets have been identified, there is generally only a small number of Listed Buildings, and as such the effects of intensification are likely to be minimal. Uncertain impacts are highlighted in the absence of site specifics for urban intensification.</p> <p>The effects of option 1c presents an identified higher risk of impacts due to increasing density in the urban areas. Any potential impacts from development have the opportunity to be mitigated through good design and safeguard from cultural loss.</p> <p>Overall, this option is likely to have minor negative impacts in relation to this objective.</p>
7	To reduce contributions to climatic change.	+	<p>There are close linkages between vehicle use and associated CO2 emissions, which contributes towards climate change, in addition to poor air quality. Embodied carbon, i.e., CO2 emissions from production of materials and their transportation in manufacturing also contributes to climate change. Carbon use is however, reducing due to sustainable transport patterns and more efficient technology.</p> <p>The new Future Homes Standard (Building Regulations) should ensure that all new homes built from 2025 will produce 75-80% less carbon. The Council could consider introducing policies into the new Plan to support this further but would need to consider impacts on development viability.</p> <p>All the growth options (in combination) will distribute growth to the urban areas. Therefore, all six scenarios could impact on air quality, but it is uncertain to what degree the impact may have. There are no existing Air Quality Management Areas in the borough. Development in the urban areas are more likely to have adverse effects on air pollution than the other alternative Green Belt scenarios.</p>

Option 1c: Increase density in the urban area

Sustainability Objective		Possible Impact / Effect	Commentary
			<p>Mitigation to reduce impacts could include new or enhanced active travel infrastructure and sustainable public transport to encourage a move away from the use of the private vehicle. Option 1c potentially discourages use of the private vehicle by proposing development that reduces car parking requirements. However, generally urban areas have good access to public transport and as various services and facilities are within proximity of one another, can be easily accessed via walking and cycling. The range of services and facilities also helps minimise reliance on the private car to travel elsewhere to reach certain amenities</p> <p>Option 1c presents a higher density of development in the urban area.</p> <p>Overall, there are minor positive effects in relation to this objective.</p>
8	To reduce vulnerability and increase resilience to extreme weather events and flooding which may be caused by climate change.	--	<p><u>Flooding</u> - Castle Point is located on the northern coast of the Thames Estuary and as such is generally at high risk of flooding due in particular to rising sea levels and more intense rainfall. There is, however, substantial tidal flooding defences, particularly to Canvey Island. There is a risk of flooding in the urban areas generally from surface water due to more intense rainfall.</p> <p>Canvey, Hadleigh Marshes and South Benfleet are in the higher flood risk zone 3.</p> <p><u>Surface water flood risk</u> - impacts regarding flood risk are entirely site specific, leading to uncertain effects in the absence of specific proposals regarding increased intensification.</p> <p><u>Fluvial and tidal flood risk</u> - Impacts regarding flood risk are entirely site specific, leading to uncertain effects in the absence of specific proposals regarding increased intensification.</p> <p>As with option 1a and 1b, and options 2a, 2b and 3, most development is directed to the urban area. Urbanisation reduces the ability of land to absorb water and so the risk of flooding may increase in more urban areas. Development in the urban areas could result in an increased flood risk – particularly if development places pressure on existing areas of green space that could otherwise help absorb flood water.</p> <p>Mitigations, e.g., SUDs can be introduced to the design of new development to safeguard</p>

Option 1c: Increase density in the urban area

Sustainability Objective	Possible Impact / Effect	Commentary
		<p>residents, buildings and infrastructure from flooding, reducing risks of flooding. However, national policy guidance provides for development to be steered to areas with the lowest flood risk in the first instance.</p> <p><u>Buildings and public spaces</u> – this objective also consider whether buildings and public spaces will respond to the effects of a changing climate (i.e., ventilation, shading and landscaping). Such design considerations are beyond the scope of this assessment and will be considered by the SA later in the plan-making process.</p> <p>Overall, option 1b is expected to have a significant negative effect in relation to this objective due to a higher scale of development.</p>
9	To maintain and enhance air quality in the Borough and reduce noise pollution.	<p><u>Air quality and congestion</u> – as identified in the alternative options similar impacts can be expected to arise from option 3. Air quality effects can be expected to be negative in relation to all options as a result of the level of growth within the Plan area, the small size of Castle Point and the presence of many strategic roads in the Borough.</p> <p>All the growth options (in combination) will distribute growth to the urban areas. Therefore, all six scenarios could impact on air quality, but it is uncertain to what degree the impact may have. There are no existing Air Quality Management Areas in the borough. Development in the urban areas are more likely to have adverse effects on air pollution than the other alternative Green Belt scenarios.</p> <p>There are close linkages between vehicle use and associated CO2 emissions, which contributes towards poor air quality. However, sustainable transport patterns and more efficient technology will mitigate potential poor air quality arising from new development.</p> <p>The new Future Homes Standard (Building Regulations) should ensure that all new homes built from 2025 will produce 75-80% less carbon which will also contribute to mitigating poor air quality. The Council could consider introducing policies into the new Plan to support this further but would need to consider impacts on development viability.</p> <p>Further mitigation to reduce impacts could include new or enhanced active travel infrastructure and sustainable public transport to encourage a move</p>

Option 1c: Increase density in the urban area

Sustainability Objective	Possible Impact / Effect	Commentary
		<p>away from the use of the private vehicle. However, generally urban areas have good access to public transport and as various services and facilities are within proximity of one another, can be easily accessed via walking and cycling. The range of services and facilities also helps minimise reliance on the private car to travel elsewhere to reach certain amenities.</p> <p>This option presents a higher density of development in the urban areas which are considered to be sustainable locations, and as such new development could potentially reduce the level of car parking facilities, discouraging private car ownership.</p> <p><u>Noise</u> - the small size of Castle Point and the prevalence of strategic roads ensure that noise related impacts can be expected to be experienced from any development sites, pending specific circumstances. Benfleet and Canvey Island in particular experience between 55-75db. Although no specific impacts are identified for this alternative, mitigation can be ensured for all options on a case by case basis and in line with the Plan's policy content.</p> <p>Overall, minor negative impacts are expected in relation to this objective.</p>
10	To promote and encourage the use of sustainable methods of travel.	<p>Option 1c, as with option 1a and 1b steers most development to the urban area where there is likely to be good access to public transport, and as various services and facilities are within proximity of one another, can be easily accessed via walking and cycling.</p> <p>++</p> <p>The range of services and facilities helps minimise reliance on the private car to travel elsewhere to reach certain amenities. As such, the potential minor negative effects are mixed with significant positive effects.</p> <p>This scenario is therefore expected to have significant positive effects.</p>
11	To ensure accessibility to services.	<p>++</p> <p><u>Community services and facilities</u> - due to continued pressure from many infrastructure providers to centralise services and facilities into fewer larger hubs, access to community facilities, services and healthcare is more viable in urban areas. As such, focusing most new development in the urban areas, i.e., the towns and local service centres would likely achieve good levels of access for new residents to existing services and facilities. Any improvements delivered as</p>

Option 1c: Increase density in the urban area

Sustainability Objective		Possible Impact / Effect	Commentary
			<p>part of new development or as a result of an increase in the local population would also increase accessibility and mitigate overloading of services.</p> <p>With this option there is potential for services to be located at ground floor level improving accessibility and contributing to active frontages in the built environment.</p> <p>Growing town centres can improve accessibility to services which can be expected to be better realised through this alternative in consideration of the Borough as an isolated entity.</p> <p>In comparison to the alternatives, there can still be expected to be multiple trips outside the Plan area for services in Southend and Basildon, however small day-to-day trips to local services will be maximised through an intensification of growth in urban areas.</p> <p>Overall, with regard to access to community services and facilities this scenario is expected to have significant positive effects in relation to this objective, and potentially ensures more equal access to facilities and infrastructure for all.</p> <p><u>Highways access</u> - the impacts of options 2a and 2b can reasonably be expected to apply should any additional land within the Green Belt be released for housing development. Although access arrangements may already be in place for any future allocated sites in urban areas (and brownfield sites) it can be expected that car movements and the suitability of arrangements will need some retrofitting should intensification at the scale required be forthcoming. Impacts are deemed uncertain at this stage as impacts can only be realised on a site by site and proposal specific basis.</p>
12	To reduce poverty and social exclusion.	++	<p>Contributes towards meeting full local housing need in the urban areas where there are existing services, potentially avoiding the need to travel and associated costs.</p> <p>Significant positive impacts are therefore expected in relation to this objective.</p>
13	To improve the population's health and reduce health inequalities.	+	<p>This option presents opportunities for development of life time homes due to an increase in the urban density, enabling occupants to remain in their homes as they age or become disabled. It also enables good accessibility and enhancement through new development to health</p>

Option 1c: Increase density in the urban area

Sustainability Objective		Possible Impact / Effect	Commentary
			<p>services and other community facilities which are generally located in urban areas.</p> <p>Many of the open spaces in the borough are located in or at the edge of urban areas. This option allows good access to these open spaces, which contributes to residents physical and mental wellbeing.</p> <p>This option can be expected to have minor positive impacts in relation to this objective.</p>
14	To provide appropriate housing and accommodation to meet existing and future needs of the whole community.	-	<p>The Council has an identified local housing need of 5,100 over the Plan period 2023 – 2043.</p> <p>Option 1c contributes towards meeting full local housing need in the urban areas offering a less positive effect. Option 1c in combination with the alternative options (2a and 2b) would offer a more positive effect in regard to meeting the full housing need.</p> <p>Minor negative impacts are expected with this option in relation to this objective.</p>
15	To promote the efficient use of resources and ensure the necessary infrastructure to support sustainable development.	++	<p>The NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and supporting infrastructure in a sustainable manner.</p> <p>Development in the urban area and in particular on brownfield sites is considered to have significant positive effects for this objective.</p>
16	To improve the education and skills of the population.	+	<p>This option in combination would require any suitable development to contribute towards any extra requirement of provision of education and / or training.</p> <p>This option has the potential for opportunities on mixed use sites for facilities to improve skills and training.</p> <p>Minor positive effects are expected in relation to this objective.</p>
17	To ensure sustainable employment provision and economic growth.	+	<p>The EDNA identifies an opportunity to deliver digital / cultural / creative industries within mixed-use town centre environments, which may conflict with urban residential intensification but broadly speaking would ensure that residential and employment opportunities are in close proximity to each other.</p> <p>Development would be focused within existing centres and Greenfield land outside the Green Belt, which would be comparably closer to existing centres and employment areas.</p>

Option 1c: Increase density in the urban area		
Sustainability Objective	Possible Impact / Effect	Commentary
		Overall, option 1b in combination is considered to have minor positive effects in relation to this objective.
18	++	All the development scenarios are likely to have positive effects including the promotion of employment opportunities in the borough's town centres, particularly the option 1a, 1b and 1c scenarios where most development would be steered to creating significant positive effects in relation to this objective.
19	?	New development as part of all scenarios will result in the use of raw materials and the generation of waste, both in construction and operation; however, this will not be influenced by the broad spatial distribution of development. Waste management practices are largely dependent on peoples' behaviour and the design of development. Therefore, it is uncertain as to the effects of development in relation to this objective.
20	+	This option presents opportunities for development to enhance the availability of digital access across the borough for both residents and employment / commercial purposes. It also enables good accessibility and enhancement to online health services and other community services. This option can be expected to have minor positive impacts in relation to this objective.

Table 12: Significant effects of Option 2a

Option 2a: Release a limited amount of Green Belt to meet local housing need		
Sustainability Objective	Possible Impact / Effect	Commentary
1	?	Impacts are uncertain for potential development in the Green Belt (as with option 2b and option 3). There is, however, a potential risk that where development sites in the Green Belt are positively measured for biodiversity net gain requirements, that the net gain may be located outside of the borough due to development viability issues.
2	?	The scale of development that would come forward under any of the six scenarios would result in an increased demand for water consumption; however, it is possible that new development would be designed and built to high standards of efficiency. The spatial distribution of

Option 2a: Release a limited amount of Green Belt to meet local housing need		
Sustainability Objective	Possible Impact / Effect	Commentary
		<p>development will not have significant impacts on water availability.</p> <p>There are, however, uncertain impacts at this stage of the Plan taking into consideration that Castle Point falls within a water stressed region with a low average rainfall.</p>
3	To conserve and enhance the quality and local distinctiveness of the Borough's landscape character and townscapes	<p>The effects of releasing Green Belt land for housing can be seen as having a minor negative impact on the borough's landscape. Aside from Green Belt implications, new development in the Green Belt has potential for highly visible or otherwise negative implications in their own right. The impacts of development are irreversible and permanent.</p> <p><u>Coalescence</u> - there is potential for release of Green Belt to have a degree of harm with regard to preventing towns from merging and creating urban sprawl. Green Belt buffers between towns may be negatively impacted on by new development. Green Belt buffers contribute to protecting characters of the towns.</p>
4	To conserve and enhance soil and mineral resources.	<p>There are no minerals extraction sites or deposits safeguarded by the Essex Minerals Plan in the borough.</p> <p>Castle Point contains areas of Grade 3 Agricultural Land which means good to moderate quality agricultural land with moderate limitations. Agricultural land is very rarely associated with farming in the borough. Limited cropping occurs in the east of the borough, most goes unused or is used for grazing. Much farmland is being promoted for housing developments.</p> <p>Option 2a in combination with or either options 1a, 1b and 1c distributes most development in the urban area and in particular on brownfield sites which is considered to have significant positive effects for this objective.</p> <p>Although the effects are considered to be mixed, overall, there are minor negative impacts with regard to conservation of soil for agricultural purposes.</p>
5	To contribute to the sustainable use of land.	<p>The NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and supporting infrastructure in a sustainable manner.</p> <p>Unlike options 1a, 1b and 1c, there could be potential impacts to local landscapes e.g., the limited amount of historic woodland and green / blue spaces. Impacts would be dependent on site</p>

Option 2a: Release a limited amount of Green Belt to meet local housing need		
Sustainability Objective	Possible Impact / Effect	Commentary
		<p>specifics. Development in the urban area and in particular on brownfield sites is considered to have more positive effects for this objective.</p> <p>This option in combination with development in the urban areas enables spatial distribution, as well as directing development to the borough's most sustainable locations.</p> <p>Overall, this scenario is expected to have minor negative effects with regard to impacts on the Green Belt and a requirement for proportionate infrastructure.</p>
6	To maintain and enhance the borough's cultural heritage assets and areas, assets of historical and archaeological importance and their settings.	<p>?</p> <p>Roman, Medieval and Iron Age finds have been identified in the Borough. At this stage of the plan making process impacts from any new development in the Green Belt are broadly uncertain and dependent on specific detailed proposals on any Green Belt allocations at the planning application stage.</p> <p>However, distributing development more evenly between urban areas and in the Green Belt may reduce the potential for effects on the built historic environment.</p>
7	To reduce contributions to climatic change.	<p>?</p> <p>There are close linkages between vehicle use and associated CO2 emissions, which contributes towards climate change, in addition to poor air quality. Embodied carbon, i.e., CO2 emissions from production of materials and their transportation in manufacturing also contributes to climate change. Carbon use is however, reducing due to sustainable transport patterns and more efficient technology.</p> <p>The new Future Homes Standard (Building Regulations) should ensure that all new homes built from 2025 will produce 75-80% less carbon. The Council could consider introducing policies into the new Plan to support this further but would need to consider impacts on development viability.</p> <p>All the growth options (in combination) will distribute growth to the urban areas. Therefore, all six scenarios could impact on air quality, but it is uncertain to what degree the impact may have. There are no existing Air Quality Management Areas in the borough. Development in the urban areas are more likely to have adverse effects on air pollution than the other alternative Green Belt scenarios.</p> <p>Option 2a proposes proportionate infrastructure and services to balance the increase in new homes. Mitigation to reduce impacts could include</p>

Option 2a: Release a limited amount of Green Belt to meet local housing need

Sustainability Objective	Possible Impact / Effect	Commentary
		<p>new or enhanced active travel infrastructure and sustainable public transport to encourage a move away from the use of the private vehicle.</p> <p>Overall, effects are considered to be uncertain for this option in relation to this objective.</p>
8	To reduce vulnerability and increase resilience to extreme weather events and flooding which may be caused by climate change.	<p>Flooding - Castle Point is located on the northern coast of the Thames Estuary and as such is generally at high risk of flooding due in particular to rising sea levels and more intense rainfall. There is, however, substantial tidal flooding defences, particularly to Canvey Island. There is a risk of flooding in the urban areas generally from surface water due to more intense rainfall.</p> <p>Canvey, Hadleigh Marshes and South Benfleet are in the higher flood risk zone 3.</p> <p><u>Surface water flood risk</u> - impacts regarding flood risk are entirely site specific, leading to uncertain effects in the absence of specific proposals regarding increased intensification.</p> <p>Effects in this regard are more indicative of the state of environment in Castle Point where flood risk is prevalent. There are potentially fluvial flood risk issues resulting from any future Canvey Island Green Belt allocations associated with land within Flood Risk Zone 3 and Critical Drainage Area 6. These areas are however substantially defended from flooding, and the Thames Estuary 2100 Plan commits to the maintenance and improvement of the sea defences for these settlements.</p> <p><u>Fluvial and tidal flood risk</u> - Impacts regarding flood risk are entirely site specific, leading to uncertain effects in the absence of specific proposals regarding increased intensification.</p> <p>Effects in this regard are more indicative of the state of environment in Castle Point where flood risk is prevalent. There are potentially fluvial flood risk issues resulting from any future Canvey Island Green Belt allocations associated with land within Flood Risk Zone 3 and Critical Drainage Area 6. These areas are however substantially defended from flooding, and the Thames Estuary 2100 Plan commits to the maintenance and improvement of the sea defences for these settlements.</p> <p>As with option 1a, 1b and 1c, and options 2b and 3, most development is directed to the urban area. Urbanisation reduces the ability of land to absorb water and so the risk of flooding may</p>

Option 2a: Release a limited amount of Green Belt to meet local housing need

Sustainability Objective	Possible Impact / Effect	Commentary
		<p>increase in more urban areas. Development in the urban areas could result in an increased flood risk – particularly if development places pressure on existing areas of green space that could otherwise help absorb flood water.</p> <p>Mitigations can be introduced to the design of new development to safeguard residents, buildings and infrastructure from flooding. However, national policy guidance provides for development to be steered to areas with the lowest flood risk in the first instance.</p> <p><u>Buildings and public spaces</u> – this objective also considers whether buildings and public spaces will respond to the effects of a changing climate (i.e., ventilation, shading and landscaping). Such design considerations are beyond the scope of this assessment and will be considered by the SA later in the plan-making process.</p> <p>Overall, option 2a in comparison to the alternative options 1a, 1b, 1c, 2b and is expected to have a lower negative effect in relation to this objective.</p>
9	To maintain and enhance air quality in the Borough and reduce noise pollution.	<p><u>Air quality and congestion</u> – as identified in the alternative options similar impacts can be expected to arise from option 3. Air quality effects can be expected to be negative in relation to all options as a result of the level of growth within the Plan area, the small size of Castle Point and the presence of many strategic roads in the Borough.</p> <p>All the growth options (in combination) will distribute growth to the urban areas. Therefore, all six scenarios could impact on air quality, but it is uncertain to what degree the impact may have. There are no existing Air Quality Management Areas in the borough. Development in the Green Belt areas are more likely to have a less adverse effects on air pollution than the alternative urban scenarios.</p> <p>There are close linkages between vehicle use and associated CO2 emissions, which contributes towards poor air quality. However, sustainable transport patterns and more efficient technology will mitigate potential poor air quality arising from new development. Green Belt options generally will potentially encourage car dependency for access to services and commuting.</p> <p>The new Future Homes Standard (Building Regulations) should ensure that all new homes built from 2025 will produce 75-80% less carbon which will also contribute to mitigating poor air quality. The Council could consider introducing</p>

Option 2a: Release a limited amount of Green Belt to meet local housing need		
Sustainability Objective	Possible Impact / Effect	Commentary
		<p>policies into the new Plan to support this further but would need to consider impacts on development viability.</p> <p>Further mitigation to reduce impacts could include new or enhanced active travel infrastructure and sustainable public transport to encourage a move away from the use of the private vehicle. However, generally it can be expected that non-urban areas have less access to public transport to reach services and facilities generally located in the urban area.</p> <p><u>Noise</u> - the small size of Castle Point and the prevalence of strategic roads (A130, A127 and A13) ensure that noise related impacts can be expected to be experienced from any development sites, pending specific circumstances. Benfleet and Canvey Island in particular experience between 55-75db. Although no specific impacts are identified for this alternative, mitigation can be ensured for all options on a case by case basis and in line with the Plan's policy content.</p> <p>Overall, significant negative impacts are expected in relation to this objective.</p>
10	To promote and encourage the use of sustainable methods of travel.	<p>Option 2a in combination with option 1 steers most development to the urban area where there is likely to be good access to public transport, and as various services and facilities are within proximity of one another, can be easily accessed via walking and cycling.</p> <p>For this option, 2a, proportionate infrastructure including active travel and public transport provision would be required for access and connectivity to facilities and services located in the urban area.</p> <p>Provision of a range of services and facilities would contribute to minimising reliance on the private car to travel elsewhere to reach certain amenities. However, there are uncertainties to the effects of this option in relation to this objective due to potential reliance on car use.</p>
11	To ensure accessibility to services.	<p>Any new development in the Green Belt may potentially inhibit direct accessibility (i.e., within walking distances) to a full range of services (particularly healthcare services and primary school education), without utilising public or private transport. Even where future site allocations in the Green Belt may be in proximity to the strategic road network (bringing residents closer to services) as well as public transport services this would however be subject to access</p>

Option 2a: Release a limited amount of Green Belt to meet local housing need

Sustainability Objective	Possible Impact / Effect	Commentary
		<p>arrangements. Such proximity could also inevitably encourage reliance on private car trips.</p> <p>However, dispersal / spatial distribution of new development may mean that services and facilities are less likely to become overloaded, particularly in the urban areas due to potential new services and facilities.</p> <p><u>Highways access</u> - New development in the Green Belt could potentially impact on existing road junctions in proximity to any future allocated Green Belt sites, exceeding capacity, and would require new access and egress onto strategic roads. Future allocation would require evidence as to transport modelling and feasibility / viability work. The SA would need to be updated once completed.</p> <p>Green Belt sites would require proportionate infrastructure and services to balance the increase in new homes.</p> <p>Overall, this scenario is expected to have minor negative effects.</p>
12	To reduce poverty and social exclusion.	<p>Contributes towards meeting full local housing need in combination with development in the urban areas where there are existing services, potentially avoiding the need to travel and associated costs.</p> <p>Minor positive impacts are therefore expected in relation to this objective.</p>
13	To improve the population's health and reduce health inequalities.	<p>This option presents opportunities for development of life time homes due to an increase in the urban density in combination with option 1, as well as new development in the Green Belt, enabling occupants to remain in their homes as they age or become disabled. It also enables good accessibility and enhancement through new development from a higher CIL contribution to health services and other community facilities which are generally located in urban areas.</p> <p>Although some development would be less well located away from the urban area, a better housing product can enable improved health benefits.</p> <p>Retention of open spaces contributes to residents physical and mental wellbeing, this option also has opportunity to increase open space provision.</p> <p>This option can be expected to have minor positive impacts in relation to this objective.</p>

Option 2a: Release a limited amount of Green Belt to meet local housing need		
Sustainability Objective	Possible Impact / Effect	Commentary
14	To provide appropriate housing and accommodation to meet existing and future needs of the whole community.	<p>The Council has an identified local housing need of 5,100 over the Plan period 2023 – 2043.</p> <p>Overall, Option 2a contributes towards meeting full local housing need in combination with Option 1.</p> <p>Minor positive impacts are expected with this option in relation to this objective.</p>
15	To promote the efficient use of resources and ensure the necessary infrastructure to support sustainable development.	<p>The NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and supporting infrastructure in a sustainable manner.</p> <p>This option in combination with development in the urban areas enables spatial distribution, as well as directing development to the borough's most sustainable locations.</p> <p>The effects of this option are considered uncertain in relation to this objective.</p>
16	To improve the education and skills of the population.	<p>This option in combination would require any suitable development to contribute towards any extra requirement of provision of education and / or training.</p> <p>This option has the potential for opportunities on mixed use sites for facilities to improve skills and training.</p> <p>Minor positive effects are expected in relation to this objective.</p>
17	To ensure sustainable employment provision and economic growth.	<p>The EDNA identifies an opportunity to deliver digital / cultural / creative industries within mixed-use town centre environments, which may conflict with urban residential intensification but broadly speaking would ensure that residential and employment opportunities are in close proximity to each other.</p> <p>Development would be focused within existing centres and Greenfield land outside the Green Belt, which would be comparably closer to existing centres and employment areas.</p> <p>Overall, option 2a in combination is considered to have minor positive effects in relation to this objective.</p>
18	To maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of town and retail centres.	<p>All the development scenarios are likely to have positive effects including the promotion of employment opportunities in the borough's town centres, particularly the option 1a, 1b and 1c scenarios where most development would be</p>

Option 2a: Release a limited amount of Green Belt to meet local housing need		
Sustainability Objective	Possible Impact / Effect	Commentary
		steered to creating significant positive effects in relation to this objective. However, the option 2 scenarios (as with option 3) are expected to have minor positive effects in relation to this objective as while they do support vitality and viability of the town centres, they also distribute development more widely across the borough. Therefore, residents in these areas may not necessarily be within proximity or able to easily access the town centres.
19	To promote the sustainable management of waste	?
20	To ensure that the digital infrastructure available meets the needs of current and future generations.	+

Table 14: Significant effects of Option 2b

Option 2b: Create a substantial new development area in NW of Thundersley		
Sustainability Objective	Possible Impact / Effect	Commentary
1	To conserve and enhance biodiversity (habitats, species and ecosystems) and geodiversity within the Borough	?
2	To conserve and enhance water quality and resources.	?

Option 2b: Create a substantial new development area in NW of Thundersley

Sustainability Objective		Possible Impact / Effect	Commentary
			<p>development will not have significant impacts on water availability.</p> <p>There are, however, uncertain impacts at this stage of the Plan taking into consideration that Castle Point falls within a water stressed region with a low average rainfall.</p>
3	To conserve and enhance the quality and local distinctiveness of the Borough's landscape character and townscapes		<p>The effects of releasing Green Belt land for housing can be seen as having a minor negative impact on the borough's landscape. Aside from Green Belt implications, new development in the Green Belt has potential for highly visible or otherwise negative implications in their own right. The impacts of development are irreversible and permanent.</p> <p><u>Coalescence</u> - there is potential for release of Green Belt to have a degree of harm with regard to preventing towns from merging and creating urban sprawl. Green Belt buffers between towns may be negatively impacted on by new development. Green Belt buffers contribute to protecting characters of the towns.</p>
4	To conserve and enhance soil and mineral resources.		<p>There are no minerals extraction sites or deposits safeguarded by the Essex Minerals Plan in the borough.</p> <p>Castle Point contains areas of Grade 3 Agricultural Land which means good to moderate quality agricultural land with moderate limitations. Agricultural land is very rarely associated with farming in the borough. Limited cropping occurs in the east of the borough, most goes unused or is used for grazing. Much farmland is being promoted for housing developments.</p> <p>Option 2b, in combination with Option 1a distributes most development in the urban area and in particular on brownfield sites which is considered to have some positive effects for this objective.</p> <p>Although the effects are considered to be mixed, overall, there are minor negative impacts (as with option 2a) with regard to conservation of soil for agricultural purposes.</p>
5	To contribute to the sustainable use of land.		<p>The NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and supporting infrastructure in a sustainable manner.</p> <p>Unlike options 1a, 1b and 1c, there could be potential impacts to local landscapes e.g., the limited amount of historic woodland and green /</p>

Option 2b: Create a substantial new development area in NW of Thundersley

Sustainability Objective		Possible Impact / Effect	Commentary
			<p>blue spaces. Impacts would be dependent on site specifics. Development in the urban area and in particular on brownfield sites is considered to have more positive effects for this objective.</p> <p>This option in combination with development in the urban areas enables spatial distribution, as well as directing development to the borough's most sustainable locations.</p> <p>Overall, this scenario is expected to have minor negative effects with regard to impacts on the Green Belt and a requirement for proportionate infrastructure.</p>
6	To maintain and enhance the borough's cultural heritage assets and areas, assets of historical and archaeological importance and their settings.	?	<p>Roman, Medieval and Iron Age finds have been identified in the Borough. At this stage of the plan making process impacts from any new development in the Green Belt are broadly uncertain and dependent on specific detailed proposals on any Green Belt allocations at the planning application stage.</p> <p>However, distributing development more evenly between urban areas and in the Green Belt may reduce the potential for effects on the built historic environment.</p>
7	To reduce contributions to climatic change.	?	<p>There are close linkages between vehicle use and associated CO2 emissions, which contributes towards climate change, in addition to poor air quality. Embodied carbon, i.e., CO2 emissions from production of materials and their transportation in manufacturing also contributes to climate change. Carbon use is however, reducing due to sustainable transport patterns and more efficient technology.</p> <p>The new Future Homes Standard (Building Regulations) should ensure that all new homes built from 2025 will produce 75-80% less carbon. The Council could consider introducing policies into the new Plan to support this further but would need to consider impacts on development viability.</p> <p>All the growth options (in combination) will distribute growth to the urban areas. Therefore, all six scenarios could impact on air quality, but it is uncertain to what degree the impact may have. There are no existing Air Quality Management Areas in the borough. Development in the urban areas are more likely to have adverse effects on air pollution than the other alternative Green Belt scenarios.</p>

Option 2b: Create a substantial new development area in NW of Thundersley

	Sustainability Objective	Possible Impact / Effect	Commentary
			<p>Option 2b proposes a substantial new development in NW of Thundersley and would also require new infrastructure. Mitigation to reduce impacts could include new or enhanced active travel infrastructure and sustainable public transport to encourage a move away from the use of the private vehicle.</p> <p>Overall, effects are considered to be uncertain for this option in relation to this objective.</p>
8	To reduce vulnerability and increase resilience to extreme weather events and flooding which may be caused by climate change.		<p><u>Flooding</u> - Castle Point is located on the northern coast of the Thames Estuary and as such is generally at high risk of flooding due in particular to rising sea levels and more intense rainfall. There is, however, substantial tidal flooding defences, particularly to Canvey Island. There is a risk of flooding in the urban areas generally from surface water due to more intense rainfall.</p> <p>Canvey, Hadleigh Marshes and South Benfleet are in the higher flood risk zone 3.</p> <p><u>Surface water flood risk</u> - impacts regarding flood risk are entirely site specific, leading to uncertain effects in the absence of specific proposals regarding increased intensification.</p> <p>Effects in this regard are more indicative of the state of environment in Castle Point where flood risk is prevalent. There are potentially fluvial flood risk issues resulting from any future Canvey Island Green Belt allocations associated with land within Flood Risk Zone 3 and Critical Drainage Area 6. These areas are however substantially defended from flooding, and the Thames Estuary 2100 Plan commits to the maintenance and improvement of the sea defences for these settlements.</p> <p><u>Fluvial and tidal flood risk</u> - Impacts regarding flood risk are entirely site specific, leading to uncertain effects in the absence of specific proposals regarding increased intensification.</p> <p>Effects in this regard are more indicative of the state of environment in Castle Point where flood risk is prevalent. There are potentially fluvial flood risk issues resulting from any future Canvey Island Green Belt allocations associated with land within Flood Risk Zone 3 and Critical Drainage Area 6. These areas are however substantially defended from flooding, and the Thames Estuary 2100 Plan commits to the maintenance and</p>

Option 2b: Create a substantial new development area in NW of Thundersley

Sustainability Objective		Possible Impact / Effect	Commentary
			<p>improvement of the sea defences for these settlements.</p> <p>As with option 1a, 1b and 1c, and options 2a and 3, most development is directed to the urban area. Urbanisation reduces the ability of land to absorb water and so the risk of flooding may increase in more urban areas. Development in the urban areas could result in an increased flood risk – particularly if development places pressure on existing areas of green space that could otherwise help absorb flood water.</p> <p>Mitigations can be introduced to the design of new development to safeguard residents, buildings and infrastructure from flooding. However, national policy guidance provides for development to be steered to areas with the lowest flood risk in the first instance.</p> <p><u>Buildings and public spaces</u> – this objective also considers whether buildings and public spaces will respond to the effects of a changing climate (i.e., ventilation, shading and landscaping). Such design considerations are beyond the scope of this assessment and will be considered by the SA later in the plan-making process.</p> <p>Overall, option 2b in comparison to the alternative options 1a, 1b, 1c, 2a and is expected to have a lower negative effect in relation to this objective.</p>
9	To maintain and enhance air quality in the Borough and reduce noise pollution.	--	<p><u>Air quality and congestion</u> – as identified in the alternative options similar impacts can be expected to arise from option 3. Air quality effects can be expected to be negative in relation to all options as a result of the level of growth within the Plan area, the small size of Castle Point and the presence of many strategic roads in the Borough.</p> <p>All the growth options (in combination) will distribute growth to the urban areas. Therefore, all six scenarios could impact on air quality, but it is uncertain to what degree the impact may have. There are no existing Air Quality Management Areas in the borough. Development in the Green Belt areas are more likely to have a less adverse effects on air pollution than the alternative urban scenarios.</p> <p>There are close linkages between vehicle use and associated CO2 emissions, which contributes towards poor air quality. However, sustainable transport patterns and more efficient technology will mitigate potential poor air quality arising from</p>

Option 2b: Create a substantial new development area in NW of Thundersley

Sustainability Objective		Possible Impact / Effect	Commentary
			<p>new development. Green Belt options generally will potentially encourage car dependency for access to services and commuting.</p> <p>The new Future Homes Standard (Building Regulations) should ensure that all new homes built from 2025 will produce 75-80% less carbon which will also contribute to mitigating poor air quality. The Council could consider introducing policies into the new Plan to support this further but would need to consider impacts on development viability.</p> <p>Further mitigation to reduce impacts could include new or enhanced active travel infrastructure and sustainable public transport to encourage a move away from the use of the private vehicle. However, generally it can be expected that non-urban areas have less access to public transport to reach services and facilities generally located in the urban area.</p> <p><u>Noise</u> - the small size of Castle Point and the prevalence of strategic roads (A130, A127 and A13) ensure that noise related impacts can be expected to be experienced from any development sites, pending specific circumstances. Benfleet and Canvey Island in particular experience between 55-75db. Although no specific impacts are identified for this alternative, mitigation can be ensured for all options on a case by case basis and in line with the Plan's policy content.</p> <p>Overall, significant negative impacts are expected in relation to this objective.</p>
10	To promote and encourage the use of sustainable methods of travel.	?	<p>Option 2b in combination with option 1 steers most development to the urban area where there is likely to be good access to public transport, and as various services and facilities are within proximity of one another, can be easily accessed via walking and cycling.</p> <p>For this option, 2b, proportionate infrastructure including active travel and public transport provision would be required for access and connectivity to facilities and services located in the urban area.</p> <p>Provision of a range of services and facilities would contribute to minimising reliance on the private car to travel elsewhere to reach certain amenities. However, there are uncertainties to</p>

Option 2b: Create a substantial new development area in NW of Thundersley

	Sustainability Objective	Possible Impact / Effect	Commentary
			the effects of this option in relation to this objective due to potential reliance on car use.
11	To ensure accessibility to services.	-	<p>Any new development in the Green Belt may potentially inhibit direct accessibility (i.e., within walking distances) to a full range of services (particularly healthcare services and primary school education), without utilising public or private transport. Even where future site allocations in the Green Belt may be in proximity to the strategic road network (bringing residents closer to services) as well as public transport services this would however be subject to access arrangements. Such proximity could also inevitably encourage reliance on private car trips.</p> <p>However, dispersal / spatial distribution of new development may mean that services and facilities are less likely to become overloaded, particularly in the urban areas due to potential new services and facilities.</p> <p><u>Highways access</u> - New development in the Green Belt could potentially impact on existing road junctions in proximity to any future allocated Green Belt sites, exceeding capacity, and would require new access and egress onto strategic roads. Future allocation would require evidence as to transport modelling and feasibility / viability work. The SA would need to be updated once completed.</p> <p>Green Belt sites would require proportionate infrastructure and services to balance the increase in new homes.</p> <p>Overall, this scenario is expected to have minor negative effects.</p>
12	To reduce poverty and social exclusion.	+	<p>Contributes towards meeting full local housing need in combination with development in the urban areas where there are existing services, potentially avoiding the need to travel and associated costs.</p> <p>Minor positive impacts are therefore expected in relation to this objective.</p>
13	To improve the population's health and reduce health inequalities.	+	<p>This option presents opportunities for development of life time homes due to an increase in the urban density in combination with option 1, as well as new development in the Green Belt, enabling occupants to remain in their homes as they age or become disabled. It also enables good accessibility and enhancement through new development from a higher CIL contribution to health services and other</p>

Option 2b: Create a substantial new development area in NW of Thundersley

Sustainability Objective		Possible Impact / Effect	Commentary
			<p>community facilities which are generally located in urban areas.</p> <p>Although some development would be less well located away from the urban area, a better housing product can enable improved health benefits.</p> <p>Retention of open spaces contributes to residents physical and mental wellbeing, this option also has opportunity to increase open space provision.</p> <p>This option can be expected to have minor positive impacts in relation to this objective.</p>
14	To provide appropriate housing and accommodation to meet existing and future needs of the whole community.	+	<p>The Council has an identified local housing need of 5,100 over the Plan period 2023 – 2043.</p> <p>Option 2b contributes towards meeting full local housing need through the use of Green Belt land.</p> <p>Minor positive impacts are expected with this option in relation to this objective.</p>
15	To promote the efficient use of resources and ensure the necessary infrastructure to support sustainable development.	?	<p>The NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and supporting infrastructure in a sustainable manner.</p> <p>This option in combination with development in the urban areas enables spatial distribution, as well as directing development to the borough's most sustainable locations.</p> <p>The effects of this option are considered uncertain in relation to this objective.</p>
16	To improve the education and skills of the population.	+	<p>This option in combination would require any suitable development to contribute towards any extra requirement of provision of education and / or training.</p> <p>This option has the potential for opportunities on mixed use sites for facilities to improve skills and training.</p> <p>Minor positive effects are expected in relation to this objective.</p>
17	To ensure sustainable employment provision and economic growth.	+	<p>The EDNA identifies an opportunity to deliver digital / cultural / creative industries within mixed-use town centre environments, which may conflict with urban residential intensification but broadly speaking would ensure that residential and employment opportunities are in close proximity to each other.</p>

Option 2b: Create a substantial new development area in NW of Thundersley

Sustainability Objective		Possible Impact / Effect	Commentary
			<p>Development would be focused within existing centres and Greenfield land outside the Green Belt, which would be comparably closer to existing centres and employment areas.</p> <p>Option 2b presents as being the only real opportunity to increase the economic profile of the borough.</p> <p>Overall, option 2b in combination is considered to have minor positive effects in relation to this objective.</p>
18	To maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of town and retail centres.	+	<p>All the development scenarios are likely to have positive effects including the promotion of employment opportunities in the borough's town centres, particularly the option 1a, 1b and 1c scenarios where most development would be steered to creating significant positive effects in relation to this objective.</p> <p>However, the option 2 scenarios (as with option 3) are expected to have minor positive effects in relation to this objective as while they do support vitality and viability of the town centres, they also distribute development more widely across the borough. Therefore, residents in these areas may not necessarily be within proximity or able to easily access the town centres.</p>
19	To promote the sustainable management of waste	?	<p>New development as part of all scenarios will result in the use of raw materials and the generation of waste, both in construction and operation; however, this will not be influenced by the broad spatial distribution of development. Waste management practices are largely dependent on peoples' behaviour and the design of development. Therefore, it is uncertain as to the effects of development in relation to this objective.</p>
20	To ensure that the digital infrastructure available meets the needs of current and future generations.	+	<p>This option presents opportunities for development to enhance the availability of digital access across the borough for both residents and employment / commercial purposes. It also enables good accessibility and enhancement to online health services and other community services.</p> <p>This option can be expected to have minor positive impacts in relation to this objective.</p>

Table 15: Significant effects of Option 3

Option 3: Release significant Green Belt land to meet standard methodology housing need			
Sustainability Objective		Possible Impact / Effect	Commentary
1	To conserve and enhance biodiversity (habitats, species and ecosystems) and geodiversity within the Borough	?	<p>Impacts are uncertain for potential development in the Green Belt (as with option 2a and option 2b).</p> <p>There is, however, a potential risk that where development sites in the Green Belt are positively measured for biodiversity net gain requirements, that the net gain may be located outside of the borough due to development viability issues.</p>
2	To conserve and enhance water quality and resources.	?	<p>The scale of development that would come forward under any of the six scenarios would result in an increased demand for water consumption; however, it is possible that new development would be designed and built to high standards of efficiency. The spatial distribution of development will not have significant impacts on water availability.</p> <p>There are, however, uncertain impacts at this stage of the Plan taking into consideration that Castle Point falls within a water stressed region with a low average rainfall.</p>
3	To conserve and enhance the quality and local distinctiveness of the Borough's landscape character and townscapes	--	<p>The impacts of the release of more Green Belt land can be seen as a negative with a higher degree of significance on the borough's landscape than options 2a and 2b. It is likely that either any allocated sites would be expanded, or a further site(s) would need to be released. This would ultimately lead to the allocation of piecemeal development within the Green Belt at the combined quantum of the Plan's unmet needs, with associated effects of an inability to check unrestricted sprawl, or the release of land which has not been deemed suitable, achievable or available within any assessment.</p> <p>Coalescence - Option 3 would potentially meet the Standard Methodology housing need but could also have a degree of harm with regard to preventing towns from merging and creating urban sprawl. Green Belt buffers between towns may be negatively impacted by new development. Green Belt buffers contribute to protecting characters of the towns.</p>
4	To conserve and enhance soil and mineral resources.	--	<p>There are no minerals extraction sites or deposits safeguarded by the Essex Minerals Plan in the borough.</p> <p>Castle Point contains areas of Grade 3 Agricultural Land which means good to moderate quality agricultural land with moderate limitations. Agricultural land is very rarely associated with</p>

Option 3: Release significant Green Belt land to meet standard methodology housing need

Sustainability Objective		Possible Impact / Effect	Commentary
			<p>farming in the borough. Limited cropping occurs in the east of the borough, most goes unused or is used for grazing. Much farmland is being promoted for housing developments.</p> <p>Option 2b in combination with or either options 1a, 1b and 1c distributes most development in the urban area and in particular on brownfield sites which is considered to have some positive effects for this objective.</p> <p>Although the effects are considered to be mixed, overall, there are significant negative impacts with regard to conservation of soil for agricultural purposes for this objective due to the scale of proposed development in the Green Belt.</p>
5	To contribute to the sustainable use of land.	--	<p>The NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and supporting infrastructure in a sustainable manner.</p> <p>Unlike options 1a, 1b and 1c, there could be significant potential impacts to local landscapes e.g., the limited amount of historic woodland and green / blue spaces. Impacts would be dependent on site specifics. Development in the urban area and in particular on brownfield sites is considered to have more positive effects for this objective.</p> <p>This option in combination with development in the urban areas enables spatial distribution, as well as directing development to the borough's most sustainable locations.</p> <p>However, overall, this scenario is expected to have significant negative effects with regard to impacts on the Green Belt and a requirement for proportionate infrastructure to balance the higher scale of development of homes.</p>
6	To maintain and enhance the borough's cultural heritage assets and areas, assets of historical and archaeological importance and their settings.	?	<p>There are likely to be similar degrees of impact resulting from this alternative scenario due to the extent of the archaeological consultation zone should there be any allocated Green Belt sites. Due to the absence of any alternative Green Belt options of the scale required, it is uncertain as to what the effects on the historic environment would be through a more piecemeal approach to releasing Green Belt land due to the site specific implications of below ground assets.</p> <p>However, distributing development more evenly between urban areas and in the Green Belt may</p>

Option 3: Release significant Green Belt land to meet standard methodology housing need

Sustainability Objective		Possible Impact / Effect	Commentary
			reduce the potential for effects on the built historic environment.
7	To reduce contributions to climatic change.		<p>There are close linkages between vehicle use and associated CO2 emissions, which contributes towards climate change, in addition to poor air quality. Embodied carbon, i.e., CO2 emissions from production of materials and their transportation in manufacturing also contributes to climate change. Carbon use is however, reducing due to sustainable transport patterns and more efficient technology.</p> <p>The new Future Homes Standard (Building Regulations) should ensure that all new homes built from 2025 will produce 75-80% less carbon. The Council could consider introducing policies into the new Plan to support this further but would need to consider impacts on development viability.</p> <p>All the growth options (in combination) will distribute growth to the urban areas. Therefore, all six scenarios could impact on air quality, but it is uncertain to what degree the impact may have. There are no existing Air Quality Management Areas in the borough. Development in the urban areas are more likely to have adverse effects on air pollution than the other alternative Green Belt scenarios.</p> <p>Option 3 proposes a greater scale of development in the Green Belt with proportionate infrastructure and services to balance the increase in new homes. An increase in population associated with this scale of development may increase out commuting and associated congestion, and CO2 emissions on local roads contributing to climate change Mitigation to reduce impacts could include new or enhanced active travel infrastructure and sustainable public transport to encourage a move away from the use of the private vehicle.</p> <p>Overall, negative effects are considered to be minor for this option in relation to this objective.</p>
8	To reduce vulnerability and increase resilience to extreme weather events and flooding which may be caused by climate change.	--	<p>Flooding - Castle Point is located on the northern coast of the Thames Estuary and as such is generally at high risk of flooding due in particular to rising sea levels and more intense rainfall. There is, however, substantial tidal flooding defences, particularly to Canvey Island. There is a risk of flooding in the urban areas generally from surface water due to more intense rainfall.</p>

Option 3: Release significant Green Belt land to meet standard methodology housing need

Sustainability Objective	Possible Impact / Effect	Commentary
		<p>Canvey, Hadleigh Marshes and South Benfleet are in the higher flood risk zone 3.</p> <p><u>Surface water flood risk</u> - impacts regarding flood risk are entirely site specific, leading to uncertain effects in the absence of specific proposals regarding increased intensification.</p> <p>Effects in this regard are more indicative of the state of environment in Castle Point where flood risk is prevalent. There are potentially fluvial flood risk issues resulting from any future Canvey Island Green Belt allocations associated with land within Flood Risk Zone 3 and Critical Drainage Area 6. These areas are however substantially defended from flooding, and the Thames Estuary 2100 Plan commits to the maintenance and improvement of the sea defences for these settlements.</p> <p><u>Fluvial and tidal flood risk</u> - Impacts regarding flood risk are entirely site specific, leading to uncertain effects in the absence of specific proposals regarding increased intensification.</p> <p>Effects in this regard are more indicative of the state of environment in Castle Point where flood risk is prevalent. There are potentially fluvial flood risk issues resulting from any future Canvey Island Green Belt allocations associated with land within Flood Risk Zone 3 and Critical Drainage Area 6. These areas are however substantially defended from flooding, and the Thames Estuary 2100 Plan commits to the maintenance and improvement of the sea defences for these settlements.</p> <p>As with option 1a, 1b and 1c, and options 2a and 2b, most development is directed to the urban area. Urbanisation reduces the ability of land to absorb water and so the risk of flooding may increase in more urban areas. Development in the urban areas could result in an increased flood risk – particularly if development places pressure on existing areas of green space that could otherwise help absorb flood water.</p> <p>Mitigations can be introduced to the design of new development to safeguard residents, buildings and infrastructure from flooding. However, national policy guidance provides for development to be steered to areas with the lowest flood risk in the first instance.</p>

Option 3: Release significant Green Belt land to meet standard methodology housing need

	Sustainability Objective	Possible Impact / Effect	Commentary
			<p><u>Buildings and public spaces</u> – this objective also considers whether buildings and public spaces will respond to the effects of a changing climate (i.e., ventilation, shading and landscaping). Such design considerations are beyond the scope of this assessment and will be considered by the SA later in the plan-making process.</p> <p>Overall, option 3 in comparison to the alternative options 1a, 1b, 1c, 2a and 2b is expected to have a significant due to the higher scale of proposed development negative effect in relation to this objective.</p>
9	To maintain and enhance air quality in the Borough and reduce noise pollution.	--	<p><u>Air quality and congestion</u> – as identified in the alternative options similar impacts can be expected to arise from option 3. Air quality effects can be expected to be negative in relation to all options as a result of the level of growth within the Plan area, the small size of Castle Point and the presence of many strategic roads in the Borough.</p> <p>All the growth options (in combination) will distribute growth to the urban areas. Therefore, all six scenarios could impact on air quality, but it is uncertain to what degree the impact may have. There are no existing Air Quality Management Areas in the borough. Development in the Green Belt areas are more likely to have a less adverse effects on air pollution than the alternative urban scenarios.</p> <p>There are close linkages between vehicle use and associated CO2 emissions, which contributes towards poor air quality. However, sustainable transport patterns and more efficient technology will mitigate potential poor air quality arising from new development. Green Belt options generally will potentially encourage car dependency for access to services and commuting.</p> <p>The new Future Homes Standard (Building Regulations) should ensure that all new homes built from 2025 will produce 75-80% less carbon which will also contribute to mitigating poor air quality. The Council could consider introducing policies into the new Plan to support this further but would need to consider impacts on development viability.</p> <p>Further mitigation to reduce impacts could include new or enhanced active travel infrastructure and sustainable public transport to encourage a move</p>

Option 3: Release significant Green Belt land to meet standard methodology housing need

Sustainability Objective		Possible Impact / Effect	Commentary
			<p>away from the use of the private vehicle. However, generally it can be expected that non-urban areas have less access to public transport to reach services and facilities generally located in the urban area.</p> <p><u>Noise</u> - the small size of Castle Point and the prevalence of strategic roads (A130, A127 and A13) ensure that noise related impacts can be expected to be experienced from any development sites, pending specific circumstances. Benfleet and Canvey Island in particular experience between 55-75db. Although no specific impacts are identified for this alternative, mitigation can be ensured for all options on a case by case basis and in line with the Plan's policy content.</p> <p>Overall, significant negative impacts are expected in relation to this objective.</p>
10	To promote and encourage the use of sustainable methods of travel.	?	<p>Option 3 in combination with option 1 steers most development to the urban area where there is likely to be good access to public transport, and as various services and facilities are within proximity of one another, can be easily accessed via walking and cycling.</p> <p>For this option 3, proportionate infrastructure including active travel and public transport provision would be required for access and connectivity to facilities and services located in the urban area.</p> <p>Provision of a range of services and facilities would contribute to minimising reliance on the private car to travel elsewhere to reach certain amenities. However, there are uncertainties to the effects of this option in relation to this objective due to potential reliance on car use.</p>
11	To ensure accessibility to services.	-	<p>Any new development in the Green Belt may potentially inhibit direct accessibility (i.e., within walking distances) to a full range of services (particularly healthcare services and primary school education), without utilising public or private transport. Even where future site allocations in the Green Belt may be in proximity to the strategic road network (bringing residents closer to services) as well as public transport services this would however be subject to access arrangements. Such proximity could also inevitably encourage reliance on private car trips.</p> <p>However, dispersal / spatial distribution of new development may mean that services and</p>

Option 3: Release significant Green Belt land to meet standard methodology housing need

Sustainability Objective		Possible Impact / Effect	Commentary
			<p>facilities are less likely to become overloaded, particularly in the urban areas due to potential new services and facilities.</p> <p><u>Highways access</u> - New development in the Green Belt could potentially impact on existing road junctions in proximity to any future allocated Green Belt sites, exceeding capacity, and would require new access and egress onto strategic roads. Future allocation would require evidence as to transport modelling and feasibility / viability work. The SA would need to be updated once completed.</p> <p>Green Belt sites would require proportionate infrastructure and services to balance the increase in new homes.</p> <p>Overall, this scenario is expected to have minor negative effects.</p>
12	To reduce poverty and social exclusion.	++	<p>Contributes towards meeting full Standard Methodology housing need with potential increase in housing types and tenures, in combination with development in the urban areas where there are existing services, potentially avoiding the need to travel and associated costs.</p> <p>Significant positive impacts are therefore expected in relation to this objective.</p>
13	To improve the population's health and reduce health inequalities.	+	<p>This option presents opportunities for development of life time homes due to an increase in the urban density in combination with option 1, as well as new development in the Green Belt, enabling occupants to remain in their homes as they age or become disabled. It also enables good accessibility and enhancement through new development from a higher CIL contribution to health services and other community facilities which are generally located in urban areas.</p> <p>Although some development would be less well located away from the urban area, a better housing product can enable improved health benefits.</p> <p>Retention of open spaces contributes to residents physical and mental wellbeing, this option also has opportunity to increase open space provision.</p> <p>This option can be expected to have minor positive impacts in relation to this objective.</p>

Option 3: Release significant Green Belt land to meet standard methodology housing need

Sustainability Objective		Possible Impact / Effect	Commentary
14	To provide appropriate housing and accommodation to meet existing and future needs of the whole community.	++	<p>The Council has an identified local housing need of 5,100 over the Plan period 2023 – 2043.</p> <p>Option 3 contributes towards meeting the Standard Methodology housing need offering a more positive effect in combination with the alternative options (1a, 1b and 1c). This would enable more housing choice throughout the Plan period.</p> <p>significant positive impacts are expected with this option in relation to this objective.</p>
15	To promote the efficient use of resources and ensure the necessary infrastructure to support sustainable development.	?	<p>The NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and supporting infrastructure in a sustainable manner.</p> <p>This option in combination with development in the urban areas enables spatial distribution, as well as directing development to the borough's most sustainable locations.</p> <p>The effects of this option are considered uncertain in relation to this objective.</p>
16	To improve the education and skills of the population.	+	<p>This option in combination would require any suitable development to contribute towards any extra requirement of provision of education and / or training.</p> <p>This option has the potential for opportunities on mixed use sites for facilities to improve skills and training.</p> <p>Minor positive effects are expected in relation to this objective.</p>
17	To ensure sustainable employment provision and economic growth.	+	<p>The EDNA identifies an opportunity to deliver digital / cultural / creative industries within mixed-use town centre environments, which may conflict with urban residential intensification but broadly speaking would ensure that residential and employment opportunities are in close proximity to each other.</p> <p>Development would be focused within existing centres and Greenfield land outside the Green Belt, which would be comparably closer to existing centres and employment areas.</p> <p>Overall, option 3 in combination is considered to have minor positive effects in relation to this objective.</p>

Option 3: Release significant Green Belt land to meet standard methodology housing need

Sustainability Objective		Possible Impact / Effect	Commentary
18	To maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of town and retail centres.	++	<p>All the development scenarios are likely to have positive effects including the promotion of employment opportunities in the borough's town centres, particularly the option 1a, 1b and 1c scenarios where most development would be steered to creating significant positive effects in relation to this objective.</p> <p>However, the option 3 scenario is expected to have significant positive effects in relation to this objective. Although it distributes development more widely across the borough the scale of development enables an increase in population presenting positive effects for the town centres.</p>
19	To promote the sustainable management of waste	?	<p>New development as part of all scenarios will result in the use of raw materials and the generation of waste, both in construction and operation; however, this will not be influenced by the broad spatial distribution of development. Waste management practices are largely dependent on peoples' behaviour and the design of development. Therefore, it is uncertain as to the effects of development in relation to this objective.</p>
20	To ensure that the digital infrastructure available meets the needs of current and future generations.	+	<p>This option presents opportunities for development to enhance the availability of digital access across the borough for both residents and employment / commercial purposes. It also enables good accessibility and enhancement to online health services and other community services.</p> <p>This option can be expected to have minor positive impacts in relation to this objective.</p>

The ultimate aim of the emerging Plan as a whole is to ensure sustainable development within the Borough in accordance with the NPPF. More is explored in Section 9 of this Report.

The effects of Option 3 – *Release significant Green Belt land to meet standard methodology need*, has been assessed as having potentially significant negative environmental impacts, but which does offer some positive outcomes should real net gains in infrastructure and services be secured.

6.1.4 The Implications of Options 2a, 2b and 3, and the Alternatives on Housing Growth

Option 2a and **Option 2b** seek to ensure that local housing need is met through directing “*intense development*” to the urban areas, in particular existing brownfield sites with multi-story development in and around town centres. To this extent, **Option 2a** and **Option 2b** has a number of positive implications in line with the merits of spatial distribution and directing development to the Borough’s most sustainable settlements; however, acknowledgement must be had to the negative implications of the development of Green Belt land and the extent to which plan-period local housing need and employment need is met through future Green Belt allocations. The emerging Plan’s **Option 2a** and **Option 2b** allows for both Green Belt protection in the first instance, with a secondary focus of new development to be located on previously developed land outside and within the Green Belt.

The proposal of release of Green Belt land exists in this sense as a last resort. In consideration of these development approaches, broadly speaking the permutations of the alternative approaches **Options 1a, 1b** and **1c** are comparably more favourable for environmental themes. Option **1a** however, has potentially **negative** implications of housing delivery within the Plan area whilst **1b** has potentially **negative** implications for the economy and economic growth and **1c** has potentially **negative** implications for the character of the local area including the character of the historic environment. The potential **negative** impacts highlighted for **Option 2a** and **Option 2b** are exacerbated by **Option 3**. Potential significant **negative** impacts are realised therefore for landscape under **Option 2a, Option 2b** and **Option 3**, and in contrast potential significant **negative** impacts are highlighted at this stage notionally for housing under **Option** alternative **1b**.

At this stage of the plan-making process there are uncertainties as to development impacts for the purposes of this SA due to the uncertainty of where growth will be located, viability of future strategic allocated sites, and the unknown outcomes of the emerging Essex Local Transport Plan (LTP4) due to be completed in 2024. Uncertain impacts are realised with regard to the possible requirement to release more Green Belt land to support potential strategic Green Belt growth allocations and how these correspond to protecting the Borough’s character and environment, and how improved accessibility will impact on the vitality of the Borough’s town centres.

There is a risk that any potential connectivity improvement schemes may have adverse impacts on biodiversity (increasing recreational pressure on the Essex Coast SPA), the landscape and openness of the Green Belt, although there can be considered generally positive outcomes regarding air quality and health through maximising the opportunities for walking and cycling and alleviating congestion.

The emerging Plan needs to have regard to environmental sustainability, ensuring a balance is struck between the likely environmental impacts and the potential benefits of the strategy, such as greater flood resilience, congestion management and economic connectivity with associated social benefits.

From the assessment of evidence and data there is a need for improvements to the road network in Castle Point and indeed, neighbouring administrative areas to deliver public transport improvements and manage congestion, potentially given the scale of growth and need for access to the strategic road network.

7. Cumulative, Synergistic and Transboundary Effects

7.1 7.1 Introduction

The SEA Directive requires cumulative, synergistic and transboundary effects to be assessed. The effects of the Plan (as assessed) may be magnified by plan-led growth, or other projects in the wider area. Discussion as to the possibility and likelihood of effects in this regard is included within this Section.

7.2 7.2 Cumulative, Synergistic and Transboundary Effects

The geographical extent of effects will be experienced predominantly in the Castle Point Borough. However, where effects would be likely to be discernible in neighbouring authorities or at a scale greater than the Castle Point Borough, this will be specified. For example, transboundary effects may be experienced as housing provision and education which can all result in flows of people across local authority boundaries. Furthermore, the high number of Castle Point Borough residents commuting to other local authority areas for work, mainly by private car, is contributing to traffic congestion and poor air quality in the region.

7.2.1 Green Belt

Across the Housing Market Area (HMA), there is substantial pressure for growth across the Thames Gateway South Essex. Except for Southend (where there is limited Green Belt), there could therefore be a significant impact on the stated purpose of the Green Belt in this location as well as for the local environment – habitats and informal open space which may be used for recreation.

The emerging Castle Point Plan has identified the potential alternative growth options scenarios in addition to options 1a, 1b and 1c which utilises urban land only. Alternative options include the release of Green Belt to enable future new development for both homes and jobs in the Borough. Any future release of Green Belt would require a Green Belt Review.

Option 2a – *Release a limited amount of Green Belt to meet local housing need*, it is proposed that this option would be complementary to Option 1a (Limit new development to the urban area). This alternative growth scenario limits the potential impacts to the Green Belt with regard to its principal purpose of restricting urban sprawl, impact on the local environment including habitats, and informal open spaces that may be used for recreational purposes.

Option 2b – *Create a substantial new development area in NW of Thundersley*, it is proposed that this option would be complementary to Option 1a (Limit new development to the urban area). This particular location for growth would require enhanced road infrastructure for access (A127 / A130) allowing for combination with potential new development growth in neighbouring Rochford and Basildon subject to their agreement.

Option 3 – *Release significant Green Belt land to meet standard methodology need*, it

is proposed that his option will require significant release of Green Belt and complementary to Option 1a (Limit new development to the urban area). The emerging Plan does recognise that this alternative growth scenario is considered to have significant environmental impacts, but also promotes the potential creation of local environmental and regeneration benefits.

All of the options presented at this time are potential options at this stage. It may be that the preferred strategy is a combination of different options. If this is the case then any future SA will assess that strategy at that time.

7.2.2 Economic Growth

The Local Plans, for neighbouring administrative areas and recent developments in South Essex, include significant drivers for employment growth including the Free Port development in Thurrock and Southend Airport. Potential proposals for town centre growth in Basildon and Southend would be significant. It is therefore likely that plans for neighbouring areas will continue to encourage out-commuting for work for existing and future Castle Point residents, aided by good strategic road links.

Furthermore, The South Essex EDNA (2017) identifies strategic employment clusters delivering economic growth potential in the sub-region, supported by smaller South Essex town centres which can contribute to strategic economic growth, including Hadleigh.

The EDNA does not identify any strategic clusters in Castle Point specifically, instead concluding that the locational requirements for multiple sectors are better met elsewhere in South Essex. The EDNA states that the strategic portfolio of employment clusters identified, 'underpins a strategy to co-ordinate and focus future site delivery and investment to ensure the area acts like a functional economic hub, rather than a group of local authority areas with competing or conflicting propositions.' Economic growth in Castle Point is therefore likely to be subsidiary to the growth of the strategic clusters, in the form of supply chain opportunities and jobs needed to support residents such as in shops, leisure and public services.

In response to this, the South Essex Councils (SEC) are developing an Economy, Skills and Jobs Strategy which sets out how the economy across South Essex can grow to maximise the opportunities arising from strategic growth opportunities. This aims to achieve synergy and consistency across each of the individual authorities in terms of the approach to economic growth and how it can be harnessed to the benefit of the entire area rather than just those authorities hosting key growth clusters. In order to identify any significant effects moving forward and outside of the sole scope of the emerging Castle Point Plan, it is appropriate that the Plan considers the SEC Economy, Skills and Jobs Strategy and ensures that matters such as housing needs align with its ambitions.

7.2.3 Biodiversity

Additionally, cumulative negative ‘in-combination’ and trans-boundary effects have been highlighted related to the potential level of growth in the Plan area and growth across Essex as a whole. The likelihood of negative recreational effects on Habitats Sites (Natura 2000 sites) along the Essex Coast has stimulated the need for a Recreational Avoidance Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) and SPD, which has been adopted by Castle Point Borough Council. The SPD sets out the mechanism for development contributions that are pooled across the County to fund appropriate strategic mitigation in relation to the residual recreation impacts of growth on habitats for nesting and feeding birds along the Essex Coast. It is further recommended that a future Policy related to the requirement and the mechanism of the SPD is included within the Plan, or failing that, clear reference to the requirements for developers within a more general thematic Policy regarding developer contributions.

As with the Green Belt growth development scenarios above, there is the potential for significant impacts on biodiversity within the Green Belt. The Plan review provides opportunities to incorporate updated policy to support the management, conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in connection with new development in Castle Point. There will also be opportunities for new policies to support the achievement of Biodiversity Net Gain in new development in line with national policy and to support the achievement of the government’s emerging Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

7.2.4 Water

The South Essex Water Cycle Study (2011) indicated that the Southend Recycling Centre is operating close to capacity and may experience difficulties in accommodating growth. Consequently, Anglian Water carried out additional investigation works for this centre. This additional investigation identified that there is sufficient capacity to accommodate growth in Southend, Rochford and Castle Point within this centre.

In 2023, Anglian Water published a Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP) which sets out how it will invest in drainage and wastewater management across its region, including in Castle Point and neighbouring areas. This sets out the improvements necessary for the Benfleet, Canvey, Rayleigh East, and Southend Water Recycling Centres in response to growth and climate change over the period to 2050.

In terms of water supply, Essex County Council have published their Water Strategy for Essex (2024) which emphasises that Essex is a “*water-stressed area*”. The Strategy also indicates that “*with climate change and population growth, plus the need to restore, protect and enhance the natural environment, the situation can be expected to get worse*”.

All the growth option scenarios in the emerging Plan have the potential to align positively with the Essex Water Strategy regarding new development by setting “ambitious policies” for water efficiency and resilience for new homes and non-

residential development. By setting ambitious policies this will help to reduce pressure in an already water-stressed area, that previous policies with lesser water efficiency standards would have had.

7.2.5 Highways & Air Quality

Air quality issues in Castle Point are largely attributable to traffic and congestion on key routes and at key junctions within Castle Point. The Transport Evidence for the withdrawn Local Plan indicated that congestion on these key routes and at these key junctions will worsen over time. The assessment of the withdrawn Plan's growth further indicated that air quality could be a cumulative issue related to the amount of new growth within strategic transport corridors. Development in Southend, Rochford and Basildon will contribute towards this congestion. It should however be noted that these districts, along with Brentwood, Thurrock and Essex County Council work together under the auspice of the South Essex Councils and are seeking government investment to address transport issues in the South Essex area. This will allow the cumulative and transboundary effects of future growth to be dealt with in a synergistic way.

8. Next Steps (Task A5)

8.1 Consultation on this Scoping Report

The draft Scoping Report will be subject to an 8 week period of public consultation between July and September 2024.

In responding to this Scoping Report, we would appreciate a response to the following questions:

1. Have we captured the right information in our review of plans and programmes and production of baseline evidence and analysis?
 - a. Have we missed any areas?
 - b. Where is information on this/these topics available from?
2. Are the economic, social, and environmental issues we have identified in this report relevant to the SA of the Castle Point Plan?
 - a. Are there any issues you think we need to include?
 - b. Are there any issues you think we need to exclude?
3. Do you agree with the proposed approach to the SA of the Local Plan?
 - a. Do the SA objectives and guide questions that comprise the SA Framework cover a sufficient range of environmental, social, and economic topics?
 - b. Are there any objectives/guide questions which should be amended?
 - c. Are there any other objectives/guide questions which we should include?
4. Do you have any comments on the Initial Assessment of the Strategic Development Options?

Any comments received during the consultation period will be considered and where relevant the Scoping Report will be revised and republished to reflect the representations as part of the Sustainability Appraisal Report that accompanies the Regulation 19 Castle Point Plan.

8.2 Appraisal of the Regulation 19 Castle Point Plan

Post-consultation on this SA / SEA Scoping Report and Initial Assessment of Strategic Options, the assessment on a draft Regulation 19 Plan will be undertaken, with findings fed back to the Borough Council in order to inform and aid Policy formulation in an iterative manner.

Assessment will be undertaken on:

- Draft Strategic Policies, including the Spatial Strategy.
- Draft Development Management Policies; and

- Draft Site Allocations.

In all the above instances, reasonable alternatives to the Plan's preferred Policy approaches and site allocations will be identified by the authors of the SA alongside and in conversations with the plan-makers at Castle Point Borough Council. Reasonable alternatives will be assessed to ensure that the preferred plan has been prepared in cognisance of the benefits and issues those alternatives present.

Consultation will be undertaken on the Regulation 19 SA alongside that of the Plan and in accordance with the Borough Council's Local Development Scheme (LDS) and Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).