

**Southend-on-Sea
Town Centre Area Action Plan
Development Plan Document 3**

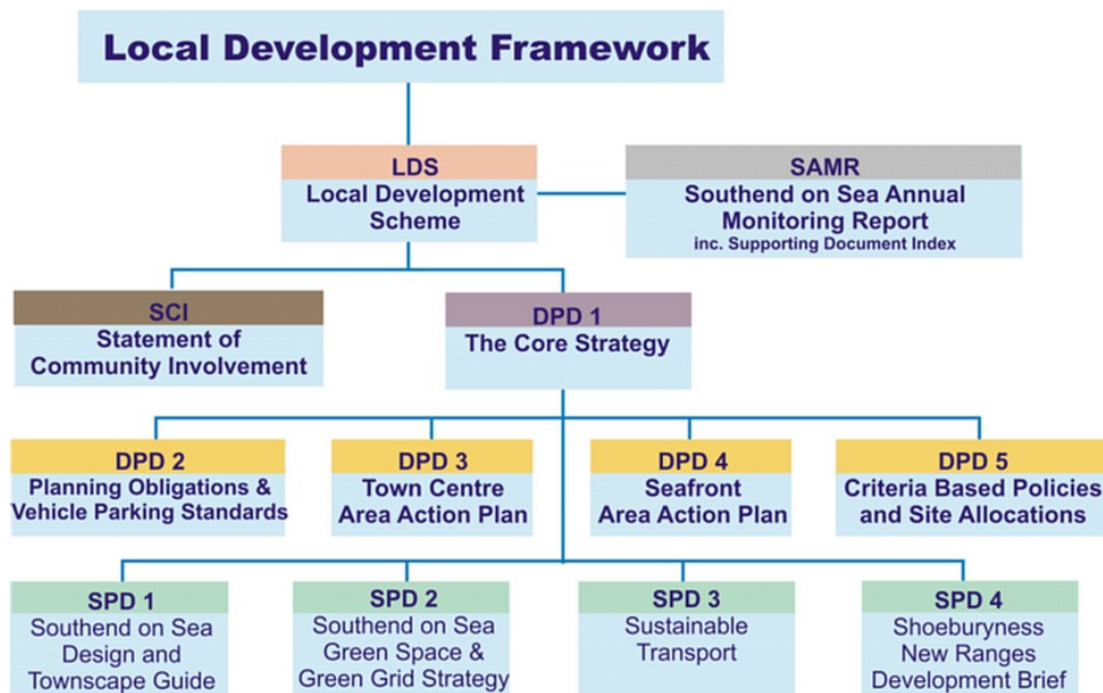
**Stage 1
Pre-Submission Consultation on
Issues and Options Report**



southend on sea borough council
local development framework

delivering regeneration and growth

Southend Local Development Framework



For further information about the Local Development Framework and a definition of terms see “Southend on Sea Local Development Scheme” (LDS)

Details of this Local Development Document

Title: [Town Centre Area Action Plan - Development Plan Document \(DPD3\)](#)

Subject: This document will contain detailed policies and site proposals aimed at strengthening the role of Southend’s Gateway Town Centre area as a successful retail and commercial destination, cultural hub and education centre of excellence, and a place to live. At the same time as this DPD is adopted, the adopted proposals map will be revised in order to illustrate geographically the application of the policies in this DPD.

Geographical Coverage: Gateway Town Centre Action Area.

Status: Development Plan Document (DPD)

Accompanying Documents: Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report including Draft Environmental Report for further consultation

Chain of Conformity: Conformity with Core Strategy Development Plan Document

Stage in Timetable for Production:

Options Consultation Regulation (25)	January to February 2007
Preferred Options Consultation Regulation (26)	July 2007
Submission to Secretary of State	January 2008
Target date for Examination	September – October 2008
Proposed date for adoption	February – March 2009

Availability of the Document: This stage is a wide public consultation. This document is available to download on the Council Web Site or available for viewing at the Civic Centre. See next page for availability of alternative formats.

Foreword

As part of the new statutory Development Plan for Southend-on-Sea, the Borough Council is producing an Area Action Plan for the Town Centre and its environs.

This document sets out how the Area Action Plan will form part of the wider planning framework, and the issues and options so far considered to guide future development decisions in the area.

Your views and comment on the content, and on any other considerations you think should be included are requested. Please send them to the following address by no later than [21st March 2007](#).

Department of Enterprise, Tourism and the Environment
Strategic Planning
Southend on Sea Borough Council
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Please Note:

This Issues and Options Report was prepared having regard to the Draft East of England Plan (Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the East of England) December 2004. Consultation is currently being undertaken on the Secretary of State's proposed changes to the Plan. The final version of the RSS will be published in mid-2007. Preparation of this Area Action Plan DPD will take into account any consequent policy changes to the RSS as appropriate.

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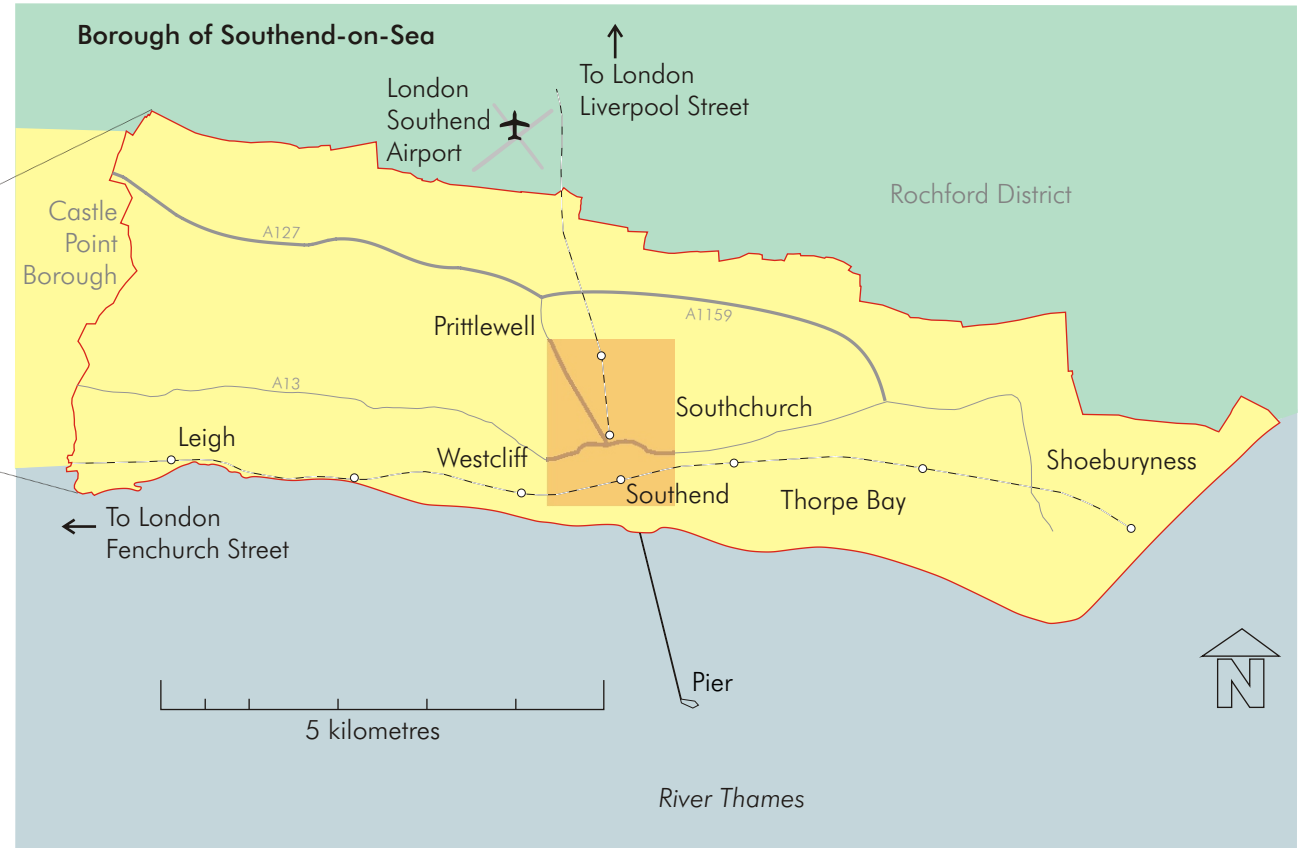
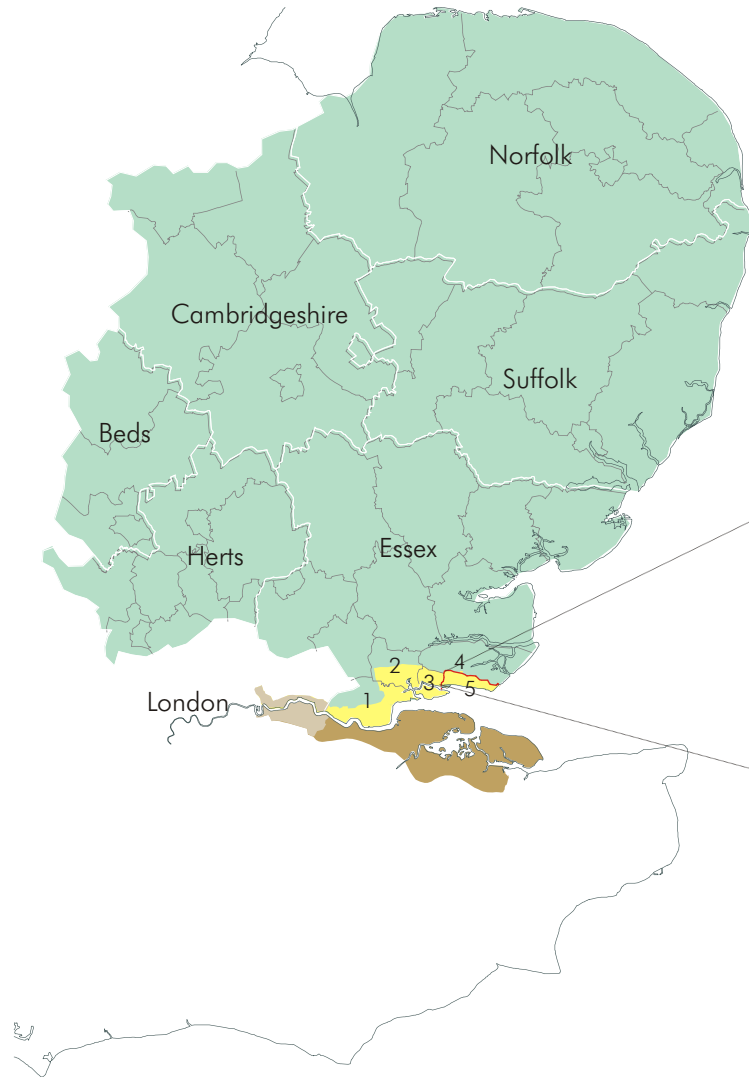
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Map 1: Context: Southend Town Centre



- East of England Region
- Thames Gateway
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1 Thurrock (Unitary Authority), 2 Basildon, 3 Castle Point,
4 Rochford, 5 Southend (Unitary Authority)
- North Kent Partnership
- London Partnership

Southend Town Centre

Section One – Introduction and Background

1. Introduction

Southend Town Centre

- 1.1 Southend Town Centre is a major retail, employment and commercial centre serving a catchment population of over 325,000 people. It lies at the heart of the Borough of Southend and its health and vitality are critical to the well being of the local economy.
- 1.2 The regeneration of the town centre is a key objective of the Borough Council as part of wider initiatives for the Thames Gateway¹, the Government's national and regional priority for regeneration and growth as set out in the current Regional Spatial Strategy (Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG 9, 2001). These provisions are reinforced in the Government's Sustainable Communities Plan of 2003² (see **Map 1**).
- 1.3 Improving the accessibility, amenity and attractiveness of the town centre will be key to achieving regeneration and delivering a renaissance of the town centre.
- 1.4 Significant progress has already been made in working towards this objective with the completion of a number of major public sector led projects in the town centre. These have been funded from various sources principally European (Objective 2), Thames Gateway and Local Transport Plan funding. These include:
 - a new college/university campus adjacent the High Street;
 - public realm improvements in the High Street;
 - new travel centre; and
 - remodelled Pier Hill improving the connectivity between the town centre and major tourism and leisure facilities on the seafront.
- 1.5 Development of the new university/college campus represents the first stage in working towards a comprehensive quality higher education establishment to serve the region and to realising the complimentary Thames Gateway vision for Southend, namely '**as a cultural and intellectual hub and higher education establishment of excellence for South Essex**'.
- 1.6 These changes have already brought benefits to the town centre, particularly in terms of improving its wider offer and vitality. It represents a first phase in addressing a number of problems facing the town centre which include;
 - outmoded retail centres;
 - under-utilised key development sites;

¹ The Thames Gateway extends from East London to Southend on the north bank of the River Thames and Sheerness in Kent to the south of the River. That part of Thames Gateway located in South Essex lies within the East of England Region.

² Sustainable Communities Plan: Building for the Future, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, February 2003
Southend on Sea Local Development Framework

- ageing and obsolete offices and industrial premises;
- high levels of unemployment;
- poor accessibility and barriers to movement;
- poor connectivity between transport hubs;
- poor transport gateways/interchanges;
- pedestrian/vehicular conflict and
- multi-storey car parks in poor condition.

- 1.7 Private sector investment will now represent the next phase in the regeneration process. It will be essential that this is planned in a comprehensive and co-ordinated manner to ensure that the full potential of the town centre is realised to deliver sustainable jobs led regeneration and growth. The regeneration of the town centre will also provide it with the opportunity to take advantage of the wider spin-off tourism and leisure opportunities to be gained from the 2012 Olympics being hosted in East London.
- 1.8 Progress has also included the establishment of key delivery mechanisms, notably the Urban Regeneration Company for Southend - 'Renaissance Southend Limited' - and the Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership together with its related Transport Delivery Board.

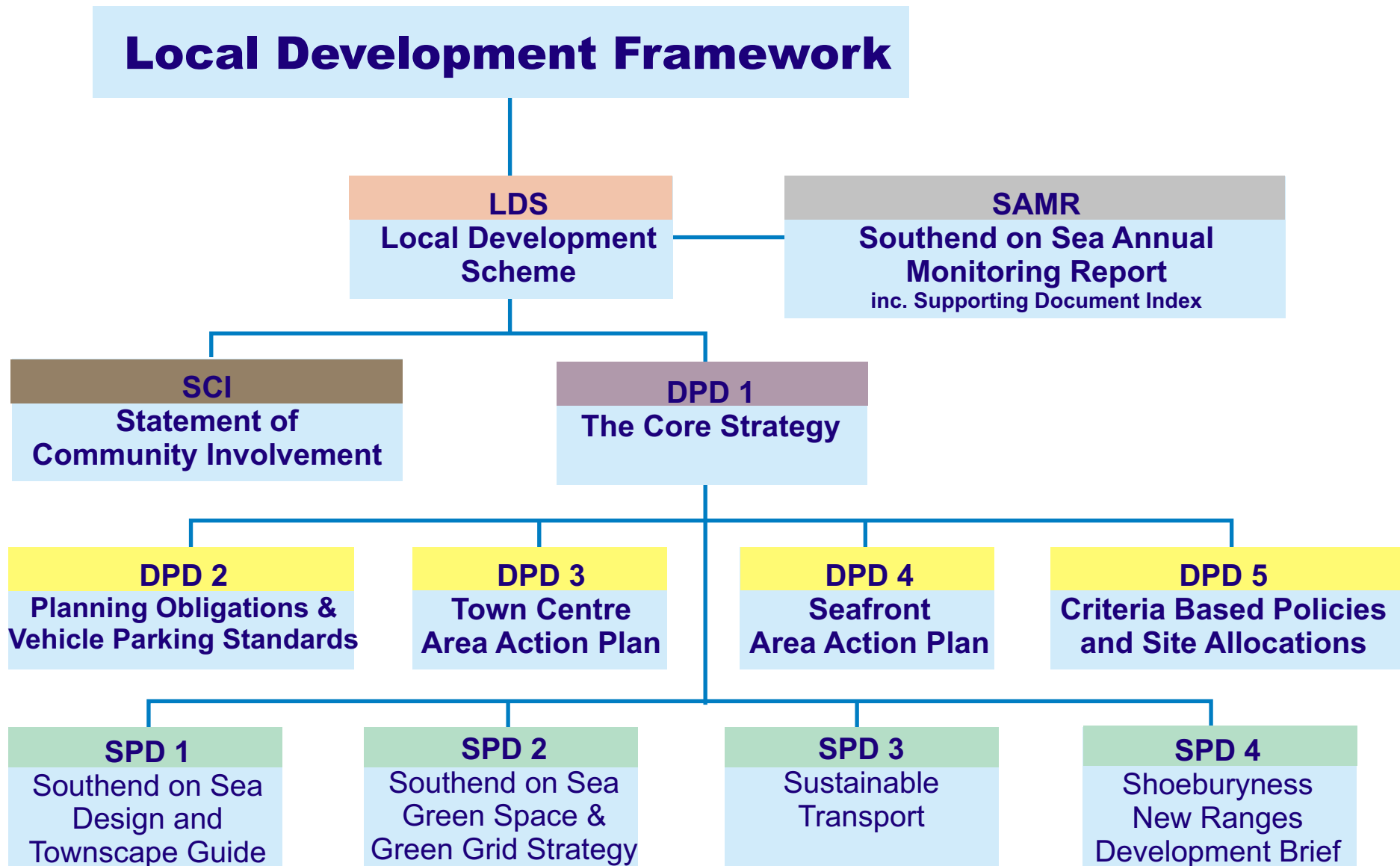
The Core Strategy for Southend

- 1.9 A draft *Core Strategy Development Plan Document*³ has been produced by the Borough Council under the new planning policy framework introduced by Government in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. It forms part of a suite of new plans that will comprise the Local Development Framework (LDF) for Southend to guide and promote future development in the Borough to 2021. The plans are being prepared in accordance with an agreed timetable (Local Development Scheme) and subject to public scrutiny in accordance with an agreed consultation framework (Statement of Community Involvement). **Diagram 1** shows the documents that will comprise the Southend Local Development Framework.
- 1.10 The draft Core Strategy has reached the submission stage and will be subject to an Independent Examination in March 2007. The Core Strategy provides the broad strategy for the spatial development of Southend and has been prepared in accordance with the Regional Spatial Strategy (RPG 9) and emerging 'East of England Plan' (Regional Spatial Strategy for the East of England, RSS 14)⁴. This includes specific targets for additional jobs and dwellings in Southend and within the town centre. The Core Strategy's policies and proposals are discussed further under 'Issues and Options' - see Section 4.

³ Southend on Sea Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD 1) – Submission Draft Document, August 2006

⁴ East of England Plan - Draft revision to the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the East of England December 2004

Diagram 1: Southend on Sea Local Development Framework - Content



1.11 Because of the significant challenges facing the town centre and opportunities for major change, the Core Strategy identifies the need for the preparation of an **Area Action Plan for the Town Centre** (AAP).

The Area Action Plan: Its Purpose

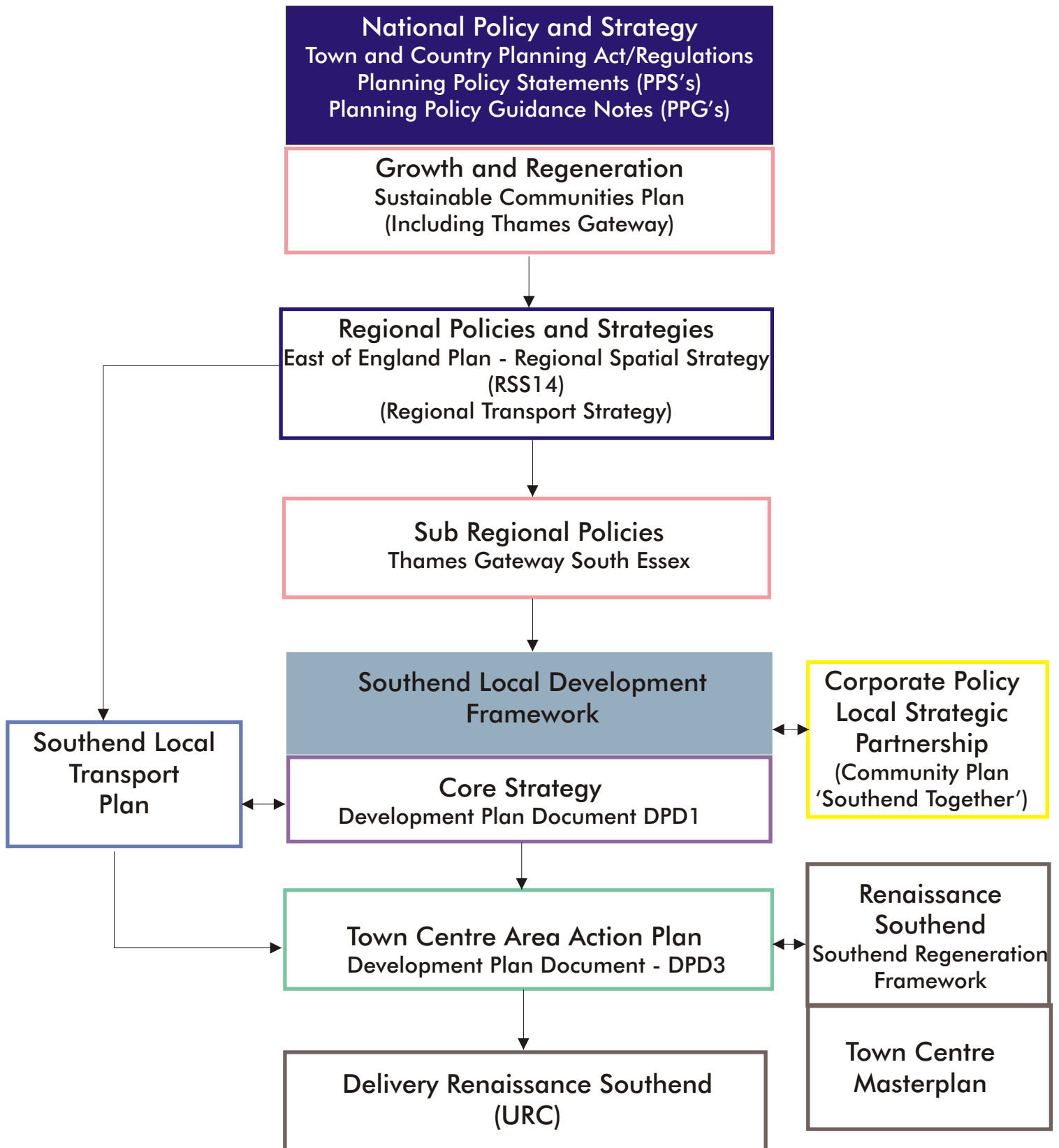
- 1.12 The main purpose of an Area Action Plan is to focus upon implementation, thereby providing an important mechanism for ensuring development of an appropriate scale, mix and quality for key areas of opportunity, change or conservation. The Plan needs to identify the distribution of land uses and their interrelationships, including specific site allocations, and set the timetable for the implementation of proposals in accordance with the planning policy framework established in the Core Strategy Development Plan Document.
- 1.13 The Area Action Plan also needs to take into account, and inform the preparation/revision of, other related plans and documents to ensure an integrated approach to regeneration. These include the Southend Community Plan and Southend Local Transport Plan (see paragraph 2.16).
- 1.14 As the Area Action Plan has a geographic and spatial dimension it is being prepared in the form of a Development Plan Document (DPD) in accordance with Government guidance. This will require the Plan to be subject to wider public scrutiny including an independent examination. This will afford the plan greater status in determining planning applications for development.
- 1.15 Once adopted, the Area Action Plan will supersede the current policy framework for the town centre as set out in the Borough Local Plan⁵. **Diagram 2** illustrates the emerging planning policy framework. Further details are set out in **Annex 1**.
- 1.14 A draft Sustainability Appraisal Report (being prepared by Baker Associates on behalf of the Council) will accompany the Action Area Plan, detailing the social, economic and environmental impact of the proposals.
- 1.15 An Area Action Plan for the Southend Seafront is also currently being prepared at the same time as this Area Action Plan for the town centre. In the central area it is proposed that their boundaries are coterminous (see Section 4, Issue 1). The timetable for the preparation of the Seafront Area Action Plan is the same as this Town Centre Area Action Plan (see paragraph 1.20).

The Town Centre Masterplan

- 1.16 As part of the Government's Sustainable Communities Agenda, a number of Urban Regeneration Companies (URC's) have been established for key towns and cities to promote and deliver regeneration and growth. A URC for Southend, '*Renaissance Southend Limited*', was established in late 2005.

⁵ Southend on Sea Borough Local Plan (1994) and its First (1997) and Second (1999) Alterations
Southend on Sea Local Development Framework
[Town Centre Area Action Plan](#)
[Development Plan Document – January 2007](#)

Diagram 2: Policy Framework



- 1.17 The Company is required to produce a 'Framework Document' for the whole Borough to guide its work. Initially the Company will focus its attention on particular areas of the Borough to deliver real change. This includes the town centre and the Company has already commissioned consultants to work on the preparation of a detailed Masterplan for the town centre.
- 1.18 As part of the preparation process of the Masterplan, separate consultation will be undertaken this year to gain the views of key stakeholders and other interested parties. Details of this work can be viewed on the URC's web site, namely www.renaissancesouthend.co.uk.
- 1.19 It will be crucial that the Area Action Plans for the town centre and seafront and the Central Area Masterplan are co-ordinated as the Area Action Plans will put in place the planning policies needed to deliver the Masterplan.

The Consultation Process

- 1.20 The stages in the timetable for production of this Area Action Plan for the town centre is as follows:

Pre-Submission Consultation (Regulation 25) - this Plan	January 2007
Preferred Options Public Participation (Regulation 26)	July 2007
Submission to Secretary of State	January 2008
Target date for Examination	September 2008
Proposed date for Adoption	January 2009

- 1.21 This plan represents the first stage in the plan preparation process, namely 'Pre-submission Consultation'. It is a targeted consultation with key stakeholders. However, the Plan is available to download on the Borough Council web site or available for viewing at the Civic Centre and all public libraries within the Borough. It is also available in alternative formats (see cover inset page).
- 1.22 This Pre-Submission Consultation Plan sets out the issues and possible options for the future development of the town centre.
- 1.23 After the consultation period has ended, the Council will take into account all comments made before preparing a Preferred Options Document which will then be subject to wider public consultation. This will detail preferred policy options.
- 1.24 The Council will also take into account the findings of research and surveys that will be undertaken by consultants on behalf of 'Renaissance Southend' as part of the preparation of the Masterplan for the town centre. Comments made on the emerging Masterplan by key stakeholders and other interested parties will also be taken into consideration in developing preferred policies for the town centre. This will be essential to ensure an integrated approach to policy formulation and delivery in the town centre (see **Diagram 3**).

Layout of Document

- 1.25 For ease of reference the document is divided into two sections. After this introduction the need for this Area Action Plan for the town centre is discussed having regard to the changes to the planning system and changing circumstances (Chapter 2).
- 1.26 Section Two sets out the Issues and Options (Chapters 3 and 4) upon which views and comments are sought. These are also to be found on the Council's web site (www.southend.gov.uk) permitting responses to be made electronically.

2. The Need for Change

- 2.1 The current planning policy framework for the town centre is set out in the adopted Southend on Sea Borough Local Plan. This is now over ten years old and in urgent need of updating to reflect the rapidly changing development scene.
- 2.2 In addition, there have been a number of significant changes in national, regional and sub-regional planning policy and in local circumstances that require the planning policy for the town centre to be brought up to date. The most significant of these changes is set out below.

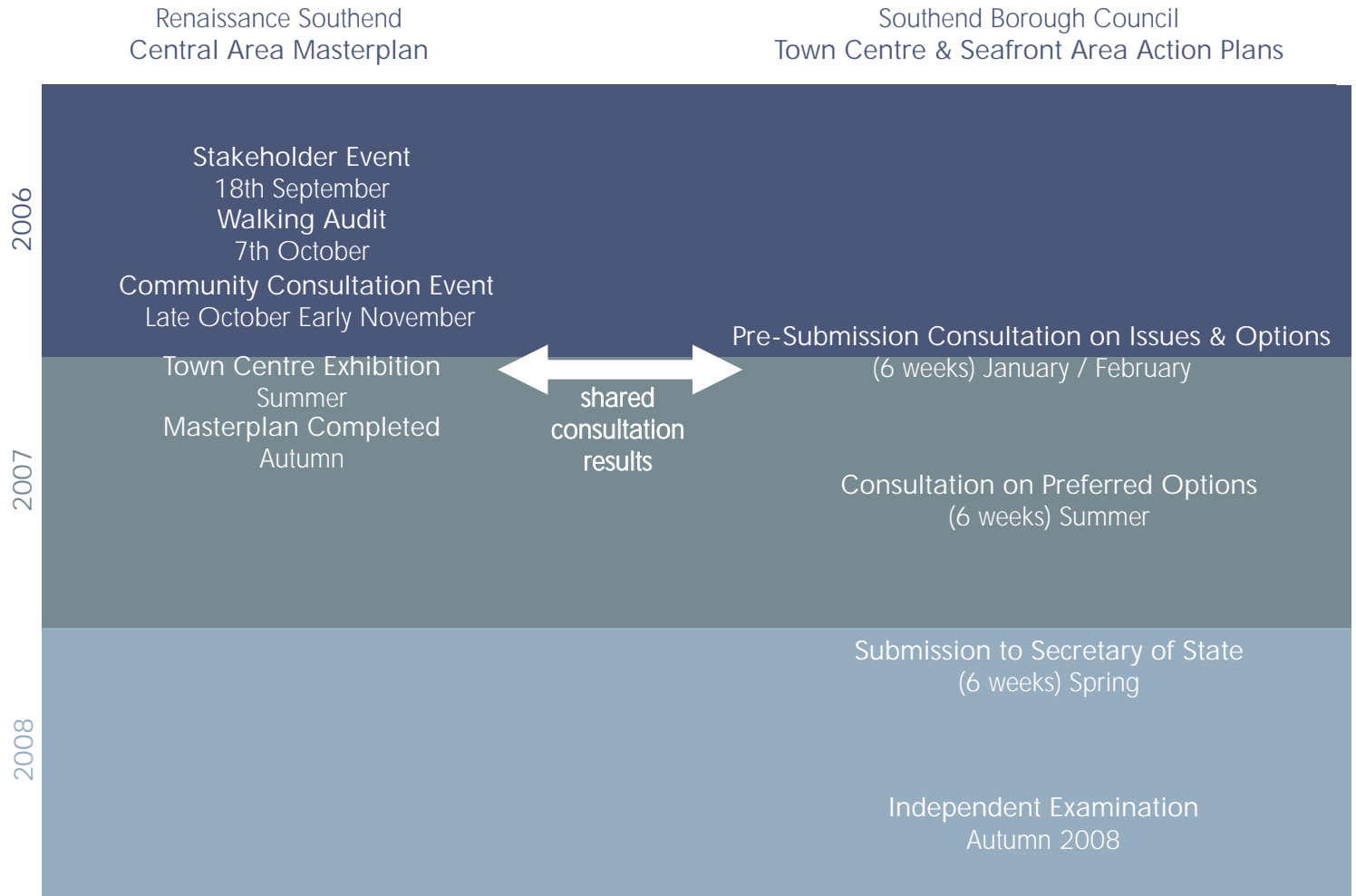
Sustainable Communities Plan

- 2.3 The Government's Sustainable Communities Plan provides the guiding principles in planning for the future economic, social and environmental needs of communities in a sustainable way⁶. The Plan has four objectives:
- high and stable levels of economic growth and employment;
 - social progress that meets the needs of everyone;
 - effective protection of the built and natural environment; and
 - the prudent use of natural resources.
- 2.4 As part of this agenda, the Government's Urban White Paper on towns and cities sets out a programme for delivering an urban renaissance for towns and cities in England to improve their economic, social and environmental performance.
- 2.5 This has taken the form of research into the 'State of the English Cities'⁷ providing for a comprehensive assessment of urban conditions and drivers of urban change and to review the impact of government policies upon towns and cities. The

⁶ Sustainable development: 'development which meets our current needs without wasting natural resources or spoiling the environment for future generations' (Our Common Future: The World Commission on the Environment and Development - Brundtland Report 1987)

⁷ 'State of the English Cities' Volumes 1 and 2, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister March 2006
Southend on Sea Local Development Framework

Diagram 3: Central Area Masterplan & Town Centre & Seafront Area Action Plans Timetable & Consultation



research includes Southend as a Primary Urban Area. Some of the policy messages emerging are that:

- policy should focus upon economic competitiveness, social cohesion and environmental sustainability to achieve balanced development;
- policies should recognise that liveability as well as economic success is crucial to people's choice of places to live;
- cities and neighbourhoods must become places of choice and connection;
- cities are important as sources of identity, culture recognition and connection between communities and cultures.

Some of the important mechanisms for the successful delivery of urban policy are identified as their effective integration and linkages between them.

- 2.6 As part of the work to take these initiatives forward, 'Regional Cities East (RCE)' has been formed. This is an alliance of six cities in the East of England, supported by the East of England Regional Development Agency (EEDA) and the Government Office for the East of England (GO East). In addition to Southend, the cities include Peterborough, Luton, Ipswich, Norwich, and Colchester. The alliance believes that by sharing best practice, collaborating on joint ventures and setting clear priorities, they can create more jobs and affordable homes than they could by working alone. They share a common belief - that medium sized cities can deliver economic growth in a sustainable way.
- 2.7 New planning policy for the town centre will need to embrace these sustainability principles and objectives and strike an appropriate balance between them.

National Planning Policy Guidance

- 2.8 National planning policy guidance is set out in new style Planning Policy Statements (PPS) which are gradually replacing Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPG's)⁸. The main guidance for town centres is contained in:
- PPS 6 - Planning for Town Centres (2005); and
 - PPG 13 - Transport (March 2001).
- PPS 3 (Housing) and PPG 4 (Industrial and Commercial Development and Small Firms) also provide guidance on housing and employment issues. PPG 4 is currently under review.
- 2.9 PPS 6 requires local planning authorities, through their development plans, to implement the Government's objectives by planning positively for the growth and development of existing centres, promoting their vitality and viability, focussing development in them, and encouraging a wide range of services in a good environment, accessible to all.

⁸ National planning policy guidance: These are produced by the Government on different aspects of planning and the rules that govern the operation of the system.

- 2.10 Provision should be made for a range of shopping, leisure and local services, which allow genuine choice to meet the needs of the entire community, particularly excluded groups, and which remedy deficiencies in provision in areas with poor access to facilities. To achieve this PPS 6 provides that local planning authorities should:
- assess the need for further main town centre uses and ensure there is the capacity to accommodate them; and
 - focus development in, and plan for the expansion of, existing centres as appropriate.
- 2.11 In relation to the latter, PPS 6 provides for a sequential approach to site selection for all development proposals in existing centres where all options in the centre should be thoroughly assessed before less central sites are considered.
- 2.12 PPG 13 provides guidance on transport issues having regard to the Government's overall transport strategy 'The Future of Transport' (July 2004). This seeks to ensure that society can benefit from greater mobility and access; to promote more sustainable transport choices; reduce the need to travel; and to ensure that transport and land use planning are effectively integrated. It also provides that local planning authorities should focus land uses which are major generators of travel demand in city, town and district centres and near to major public transport interchanges.

Regional Spatial Strategy and Thames Gateway

- 2.13 National planning objectives and guidance are incorporated in the emerging draft East of England Plan (Regional Spatial Strategy - RSS 14), which once adopted will replace current regional policy set out in RPG 9. This sets out specific guidance for the Thames Gateway South Essex (TGSE) sub-region with the central aim of delivering employment led regeneration, whilst maintaining a sustainable balance between jobs and housing. Having regard to the inadequacies of the existing transport network, the Plan also recognises the need for a 'step change' in transport infrastructure and accessibility provision as a pre condition to additional development⁹.
- 2.14 The main policy elements relating to Southend Town Centre are:
- Policy TG/SE 1: Southend Town Centre is identified as a focus for regeneration led by the development of the University Campus, to secure a full range of quality sub-regional services and facilities providing 6,500 new jobs and 1,650 additional homes, with upgrading of strategic and local passenger transport accessibility, including development of Southend Central and Southend Victoria stations as strategic transport interchanges;

⁹ The London to Southend Movement Study (LOTS, 2004) - Hyder Consulting Limited for TGSE Partnership. The Study identified that the scale of transportation problems in TGSE is such that demand management alone will not solve the problems and there is no escaping the need for significant investment in transport infrastructure and services to deliver a 'step change' in provision.

- Policy SS5: provides that thriving, vibrant and attractive town centres are fundamental to the sustainable development of the Region and will continue to be the focus for investment, environmental enhancement and regeneration;
- Policy E9: identifies Southend as a major regional centre;
- Policy E10: requires new retail development to be located in existing centres and to be consistent in scale with the size and character of the centre and its role in the regional structure;
- Policy T2: identifies Southend town centre as a Regional Interchange Centre.

2.15 These policy provisions were subject to Public Examination in November 2005 to March 2006. The Panel Report¹⁰ of their findings and recommendations was published in June 2006. These will be subject to further public consultation from December 2006 to early March 2007 before the Secretary of State formally adopts the Plan in early 2007.

The Community Strategy

2.16 The Southend Local Strategic Partnership has prepared 'Southend Together', the Community Plan for Southend setting out the priorities for the Borough for the next ten years. The Plan was updated in 2006. The Community Plan seeks to bring together all the existing plans and strategies for Southend so there is one joined up approach to making Southend a better place to live, work and visit.

2.17 The Plan's vision for Southend, which is guided by three overriding principles - sustainable development, equality of opportunity and social inclusion, is 'a vibrant coastal town and a prosperous regional centre where people enjoy living, working and visiting.'

It seeks to pursue seven ambitions for the town:

- a prosperous local community;
- improved transport and infrastructure and a quality environment;
- a cultural capital of the East of England;
- opportunities for learning for all and a highly skilled workforce;
- improved health and well being;
- reduction in crime, disorder and offending, and
- better life chances for vulnerable people.

2.18 The Plan specifically seeks to improve the town centre and to develop the university campus. There is significant synergy between these ambitions and the requirements of, and approach to, regeneration in the Thames Gateway South Essex.

The Corporate Plan

2.19 The Corporate Plan sets the future direction for the Borough Council. It commits the Council to working with its partners in the public, business, voluntary and

¹⁰ East of England Plan - Report of the Panel June 2006
 Southend on Sea Local Development Framework
[Town Centre Area Action Plan](#)
[Development Plan Document – January 2007](#)

community sectors to meeting its vision of 'creating a better Southend' and contributes to the objectives in Southend's Community Plan.

2.20 The Plan has 7 critical corporate priorities these are:

- Community safety and anti-social behaviour
- Housing – ALMO moving forwards to achieve two stars
- Looked after children – improve outcomes
- Waste disposal and refuse collection
- Improving public satisfaction
- Economic well being
- Organisational development.

2.21 The community safety and anti-social behaviour priority reflects the duty under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and subsequent amendments in the Police Reform Act 2002 to do all it reasonably can to reduce and prevent further crime and disorder in its area. The Borough Council has therefore prepared the Southend-on-Sea Crime, Disorder and Drugs Strategy 2005-2008 and will, through the Southend Crime and Disorder Partnership, seek to combat the problems of crime and disorder through the implementation of strategic priorities and measured by the annual assessment of identified action point. This Area Action Plan needs to embrace this issue and the other critical corporate priorities listed above. In particular, it should promote and facilitate the development of high quality, attractive and successful environments, in both the public and private domains, thereby improving community safety and reducing anti-social behaviour, improving public satisfaction, and promoting and improving the economic well-being of Southend.

The Local Transport Plan

2.22 The first Local Transport Plan (LTP 1) for Southend was adopted in June 2000, having been prepared in partnership with the local resident and business community together with transport operators and users¹¹. It provided for a long-term strategy for transport infrastructure and service improvements and a five-year implementation programme of schemes.

2.23 Following Government approval and the allocation of funding, the Plan's provisions have resulted in a number of significant transport improvements in the town centre. These have included electronic car parking information (Variable Message Signs), real time travel information and infrastructure improvements for bus passengers, upgraded pedestrian footways and new cycling facilities. However, the most significant development has been the completion of the new travel centre and the first phases of the A13 Passenger Transport Corridor as part of the development of the Major Scheme. Replacing an ageing and outmoded bus station, the travel centre has brought a new focus to the south-eastern quarter of the town centre.

¹¹ Southend Integrated Transport Partnership comprising of over 300 representative bodies and organisations.

- 2.24 LTP 2 (March 2006) takes forward and refines the LTP 1 strategy having particular regard to the Regional Transport Strategy and sub-regional policy provisions set out in the emerging East of England Plan (RSS 14). It has been prepared as an integral part of the preparation of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document for the Borough (see paragraph 1.9) to ensure an integrated approach to land use and transportation planning. It builds on the Community Plan vision and seeks to:
- 'secure a step change in transport provision and services to deliver quality integrated facilities, improved accessibility and the long term sustainability of Southend necessary to achieving the town's potential for regeneration and growth to provide for a vibrant and prosperous coastal town and a regional centre of cultural and intellectual excellence'.
- 2.25 The Plan's strategy identifies the need for a number of major transport improvements that will affect the town centre (see **Annex 2**). These are considered further in Section 4, 'Issues and Options'.
- 2.26 The LTP2 includes an Accessibility Strategy aimed at helping people from disadvantaged groups or areas to obtain access to jobs and essential services. This has been developed as a key tool in delivering elements of the Community Plan. The accessibility vision for Southend is to: 'maximise accessibility to education, employment and healthcare for all walks of life and in particular to the socially excluded sections of the population, through transport and non-transport solutions'.
- 2.27 Seven Action Areas have been adopted to deliver improvements in accessibility to education, employment and health facilities, particularly to areas outside the town centre currently poorly served by public transport. Two of these affect the town centre. Action Area 2 seeks to improve the efficiency of education transport service provision, including access to the further education facilities established in the town centre, whilst Action Area 6 seeks to improve transport information.
- 2.28 A number of performance indicators and targets are set out in the Local Transport Plan that specifically relate to town centre accessibility. These reflect the desire to actively manage traffic growth by encouraging the use of public transport, walking and cycling and by co-ordinating the LTP priorities of reducing congestion, improving accessibility, road safety and air quality.
- 2.29 Improvements to Southend Victoria Railway Station to provide for improved integrated facilities are currently being developed in partnership utilising LTP monies and European funding (Interreg iiib) as part of the 'SustAccess' North Sea European Programme.

Evidence Base

- 2.30 In addition to the above it will be important for the Area Action Plan to build on and take into account the findings of a number of recent studies on the town

centre. A number of key issues identified in these studies are referred to in the following section on *Issues and Options*'. These studies include:

The Southend on Sea Gateway Town Centre Strategy 2002-2012

The Borough Council's Scrutiny Committee undertook this study in 2001. The study involved extensive consultation with key stakeholders during its preparation. It sets out a vision and specific themes for the future development of the town centre.

Southend on Sea Town Centre Implementation Plan and Financial Framework

This study, undertaken by 'Boro Happold' consultants on behalf of the Borough Council in the summer of 2003, builds on the work of the Scrutiny Committee. It sets out the principles for a Masterplanning approach and identifies potential zones of intervention and specific projects.

Southend Retail Study

Undertaken by CB Richard Ellis consultants on behalf of the Borough Council in late 2003 this study identifies future retail needs in the Borough including those for the town centre. The study was specifically commissioned by the Borough Council to inform its Local Development Framework preparation.

- 2.31 The findings of research and public consultation as part of the Urban Regeneration Company's Central Area Masterplan will also provide important inputs into the Town Centre Area Action Plan.