

Section Two - Issues and Options

3. Overview

Character of Southend Town Centre

- 3.1 Southend Town Centre is the Borough's most important commercial and largest shopping centre. It benefits from good levels of public transport accessibility, has a wide range of national retailers located in its centre and is home to some of the town's major employers. It provides nearly 40% of all the jobs in the Borough.
- 3.2 The central retail core is based on a linear form, the High Street extending for a mile and a half in a south-north direction from the seafront. The High Street is pedestrianised and has been recently refurbished with the benefit of European funding. Following the multi-million pound design award winning Pier Hill development, it has improved pedestrian access with the seafront and its extensive tourism and leisure facilities.
- 3.3 The High Street is anchored at its northern and southern ends by the Victoria Plaza and Royals retail centres respectively. The former is a 1960's development currently under refurbishment whilst the latter is a late 1980's climate controlled centre. On the periphery of the northern part of the High Street is located the centres only major food retailer, retail park (London Road) and a major retail outlet (adjacent Victoria Railway Station) offering non –food bulky goods items.
- 3.4 The new college/university complex adjacent the High Street has brought a new focus and vitality to the centre. Whilst the development of a multi-plex cinema, restaurants, clubs, cafes and bars, principally on the side streets from the High Street, have given the town centre a complimentary leisure offer and night time economy.
- 3.5 Extensive areas of high-density housing providing homes for some 18,000 people (11% of the Borough total) in 10,000 households adjoin the centre. In some locations the residential environment is affected by the commercial activities of the centre. Areas of housing to the north (Prittlewell), west (Cliffdown and Milton) and east (Warrior Square) of the High Street are of historic and architectural quality and are designated as Conservation Areas.
- 3.6 To the north of the High Street lies the Victoria Avenue office district and Sutton Road commercial area. Victoria Avenue has a number of 1960's office developments in this location some of which are now outmoded for to-days high-tech requirements. The Sutton Road area has an important local shopping centre, retail park (Greyhound) and ageing industrial premises in an environment of mixed quality.
- 3.7 The town centre is accessed by the A127 dual carriageway via Victoria Avenue, the only strategic route to the town, and the single carriageway A13 (London Road).

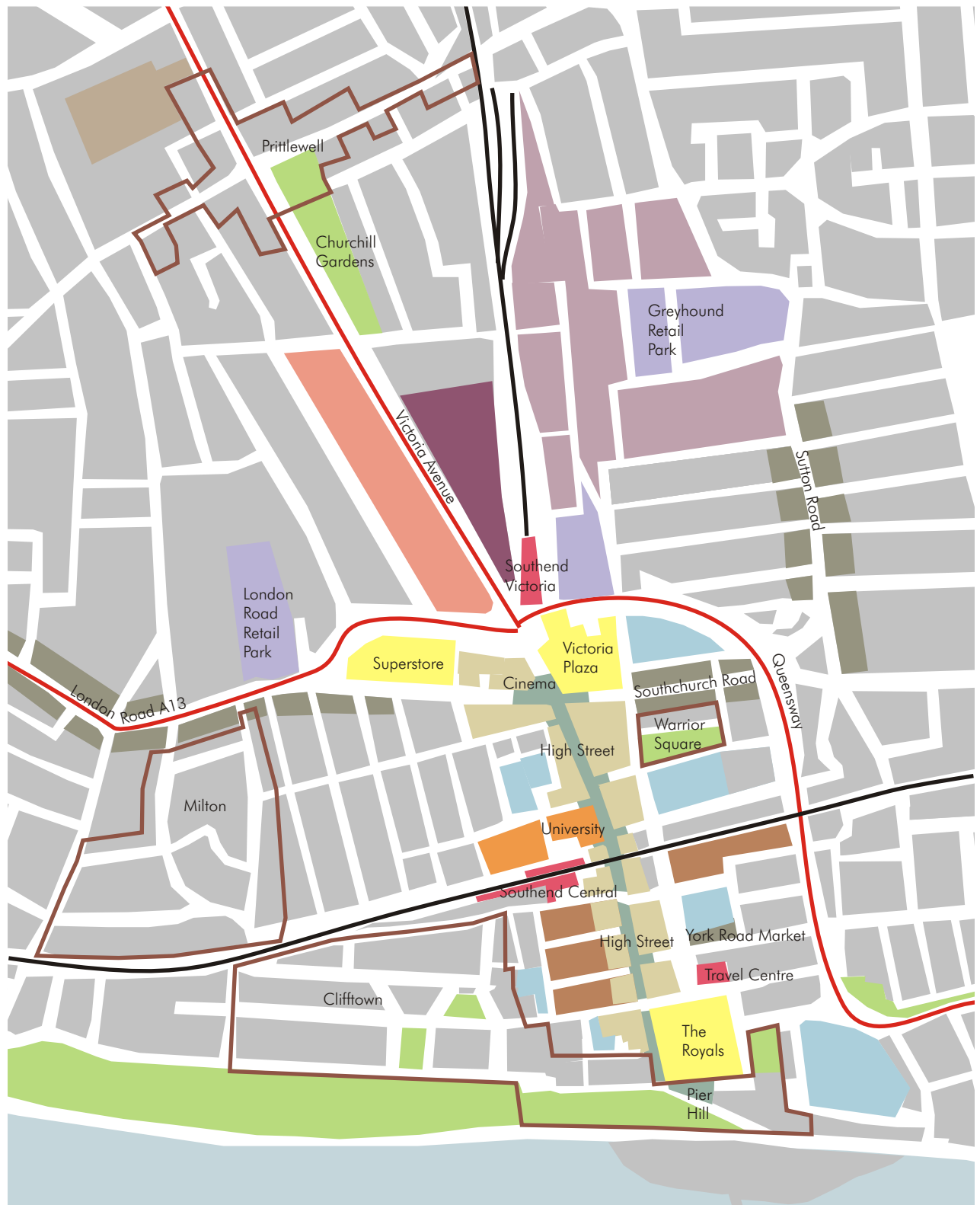
The latter has recently been upgraded to provide for improved bus transport infrastructure as part of the Local Transport Plan's designated Passenger Transport Corridor. The 'Queensway' outer ring road provides the by-pass to the east of the High Street central area and the main access to the seafront.

- 3.8 The town centre has surface and multi storey car parking facilities for some 5,000 vehicles. Some of the multi-storey facilities are reaching the limit of their life expectancy. The publicly owned car parks have a charging mechanism that favours short stay parking in order to encourage shoppers and deter commuter parking. Virtually the whole of the town centre is covered by a controlled parking zone, controlling on-street parking facilities.
- 3.9 Two railway lines serve the town centre the London Fenchurch Street to Shoeburyness line (c2c Rail) and London Liverpool Street to Southend Victoria ('One' Rail). Southend Central on the c2c line is located adjacent the mid point of the High Street whilst Southend Victoria is located at its northern end. Connectivity between the stations and the new Travel Centre is generally poor but improvements are currently underway. Nevertheless, there remains scope for further enhancements. The new University complex is located immediately adjacent the Central Station.
- 3.10 Bus services are run principally by two private companies in the Borough (Arriva and First Essex buses Ltd.) and have their hub at the new Travel Centre.
- 3.11 These existing main characteristics of the town centre are shown in **Map 2**.



















Making Your Views Known

- 3.12 Once adopted the Southend Town Centre Area Action Plan will provide a comprehensive planning policy statement for the town centre to guide development decisions to 2021. It will have policies covering all major planning policy issues including shopping, housing and transport. It is therefore vitally important that key stakeholders and other interested parties make their views known at this initial stage of public participation.
- 3.13 Having regard to the emerging planning framework, related plans and evidence base (see Chapter 2), issues facing the town centre are identified under various policy themes. Against these issues options for how the town centre policy might respond are suggested. These are posed as questions and answers.
- 3.14 We would welcome your views on the issues and options. We would like you to respond by identifying your preferred option for each of the issues raised or an alternative option that you may consider appropriate using the attached form or by responding by electronic mail via the Council's web site.

Map 2: Southend Town Centre Existing Characteristics



Predominant Land Uses

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
|  Railways |  Core Retail Area |  Education |
|  Main Roads |  Major Stores |  Car Parks |
|  Conservation Areas |  Secondary Retail Areas |  Office Area |
|  Travel Centre & Stations |  Retail Park |  Secondary Office Area |
|  Pedestrianised Area |  Football Ground |  Industrial Area |
|  Civic Area |  Public Open Space |  Residential Areas |

- 3.15 We would also like you to raise any additional issues together with views on how these additional issues might be best addressed in the emerging Area Action Plan (see **Issue 41**).
- 3.16 In developing the next stage of the Area Action Plan (Preferred Options, Regulation 26), the options preferred will be presented. In some cases these may not be a discrete option as presented below, but rather may be a combination of a range of options taking the best parts of each.

4. The Issues and Options

Town Centre Area Action Plan Boundary

- 4.1 In considering future planning policy for the town centre, it is important to understand what we mean by the town centre. Planning guidance dictates that a boundary depicting the extent of an Area Action Plan has to be defined on an Ordnance Survey base.
- 4.2 Government guidance (PPS 6) provides that the town centre should be a defined area, marked on the proposals map, which includes the primary shopping area and areas of predominantly leisure, business and other main town centre uses within or adjacent to the primary shopping area. These main town centre uses should include: retail (including warehouses and factory outlet centres), leisure and entertainment uses and the more intensive sporting facilities, offices, arts, cultural and tourism uses and housing as part of mixed use development.
- 4.3 The town centre boundary contained in current policy in the adopted Borough Local Plan has a boundary that includes the Victoria Avenue office district, adjacent housing areas but excludes the central seafront area.
- 4.4 The Urban Regeneration Company (URC) as part of their Central Area Masterplan preparations are proposing a town centre boundary that is similar to the Borough Local Plan boundary but includes more extensive areas of housing in Milton and includes the central commercial seafront area. The latter is included on the basis that the link between the commercial activities of the town centre and tourism related facilities in the central seafront area are such that they should be considered together.
- 4.5 As part of the programme for the preparation of the Local Development Framework, it is proposed that the central seafront area directly to the south of the High Street should be included in the Seafront Area Action Plan extending from Leigh to Shoeburyness. This includes the Seaway Car Park.
- 4.6 In considering a boundary for the Town Centre Area Action Plan it is important to ensure that all land uses which impact on, or are affected by the activities of the

town centre, are included in the boundary to provide for an effective and integrated policy framework.

- 4.7 The Borough Local Plan boundary, URC proposed boundary and a suggested new boundary for the Town Centre Area Action Plan incorporating adjacent uses, are set out in **Map 3**.

Issue 1. Town Centre Area Action Plan Boundary	
Issue	Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ where should the boundary for the Town Centre Area Action Plan be drawn? ▪ the Central Seafront Area (including Seaway Car Park) is currently being incorporated in the Seafront Area Action Plan. Is this appropriate or should it be incorporated in the Town Centre Area Action Plan? 	<p>1A: maintain existing town centre boundary contained in the Borough Local Plan (excludes Central Seafront Area)</p> <p>1B: adopt the boundary as proposed by the Urban Regeneration Company (includes Central Seafront Area).</p> <p>1C: adopt a new boundary as defined in Map 3</p> <p>1D: adopt another boundary to include/delete other areas? Please define.</p>

The Central Business District

- 4.8 Establishing the boundary for the Area Action Plan establishes the area to which the planning policies in the document will apply. However, in relation to the provision of commercial and retail uses, it will also be important to define the area within the town centre to which these uses will be directed in the interests of good planning to protect adjacent residential amenities and the environment of the town centre.
- 4.9 Current policy in the Borough Local Plan achieves this by defining a Central Business District boundary to which such development will be directed to promote the comprehensive development of under used sites within the town centre and to safeguard and improve the environment of housing areas adjoining the Central Business District.
- 4.10 In the Borough Local Plan the Central Business District has the same boundary as the town centre boundary as shown on **Map 3**. Therefore, in considering this issue, dependant on the option chosen for the town centre boundary (Issue 1), it may be that the preferred boundaries for the town centre Area Action Plan and the Central Business District are the same.

Issue 2. The Central Business District	
Issue	Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ within the town centre to which area should commercial and retail development be directed? ▪ should this be referred to as the 'Central Business District' or another phrase to reflect its wider commercial and leisure role such as 'Core Activity Area'? 	<p>2A: maintain existing Central Business District boundary as defined in the Borough Local Plan (see Map 3)</p> <p>2B: define a different boundary. Please define.</p> <p>2C: rely on designated allocations and the sequential approach to determine appropriate locations for such uses (see Issue 7).</p>

Map3 :Town Centre & Seafront Area Action Plans - Boundary Options



A Vision for the Town Centre

- 4.11 Planning guidance¹² provides that in order to effectively promote and guide future development decisions, a clear spatial vision should be adopted for Local Development Frameworks. The vision should be realistic and emphasise local distinctiveness with a focus on delivery.
- 4.12 The spatial vision/aim for the Southend Borough is set out in the Core Strategy Development Plan Document, developed having regard to national and regional policy guidance and the Community Plan. This seeks to:
- 'secure a major refocus of function and the long term sustainability of Southend as a significant urban area which serves local people and the Thames Gateway.'
- 4.13 To achieve this aim, the Core Strategy recognises that there is a need to release the potential of Southend's land and buildings to achieve measurable improvements in the town's economic prosperity, transportation networks, infrastructure and facilities; and the quality of life for all its citizens. This will include safeguarding and improving the standards of the town's amenities and improving the quality of the natural and built environment.
- 4.14 A number of complimentary visions are set out in other related plans and policy documents (see Chapter 2) including the Community Plan vision to secure
- 'a vibrant coastal town and a prosperous regional centre where people enjoy living, working and visiting.'
- 4.15 A town centre vision will need to conform with and add value to the broader spatial vision set out in the Core Strategy. It will also need to reflect the overall Government and corporate objectives of urban regeneration, sustainability and renaissance. It would provide the guiding principles and focus for future policy and development decisions within the town centre.
- 4.16 As part of their preparation of a 'Gateway Town Centre Strategy' in 2001, the Town Centre Scrutiny Committee adopted a town centre vision (see Chapter 2). This was prepared following extensive consultation with key stakeholders. The vision is that Southend town centre will become:
- 'the foremost town centre of South Essex, Thames Gateway and beyond, offering an increasingly vibrant mix of shopping, cultural and leisure activities, supported by thriving commercial, education and technology sectors'.
- 4.17 The current adopted Borough Local Plan does not set a specific vision for the town centre but has a wider aim to:

¹² PPS 12 Local Development Frameworks and its associated companion guide - Creating Local Development Frameworks (paragraph 2.3).
Southend on Sea Local Development Framework
Town Centre Area Action Plan
Development Plan Document – January 2007

'promote the development of those functions which will secure a sound economic future for the town in the retail, leisure, commercial and industrial business sectors, by exploiting the town's unique seaside location, sub-regional shopping centre and proximity to London whilst creating an attractive environment for people living in or visiting the town.'

Issue 3. A Vision for Southend Town Centre	
Issue	Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ what should the vision be for the town centre to effectively promote and guide future development decisions over the next 15 years? 	<p>3A: adopt a vision focussed on promoting specific sectors, such as retail</p> <p>3B: adopt a vision that is much more generalised seeking a mix of developments (similar to that contained in the 'Gateway Town Centre Strategy')</p> <p>3C: adopt a vision that takes into account other principles. Please specify.</p>

Objectives

4.18 The Core Strategy has a number of strategic objectives related to its principal vision/aim. The majority of these have spatial implications for the town centre and relate to such issues as future jobs, housing, transport provision, design and environmental issues. Strategic Objective SO8 specifically seeks to

'secure a thriving, vibrant and attractive town centre and network of district and local centres'.

4.19 The challenge for this Area Action Plan will be how this is implemented through a spatial and land use planning framework. In taking forward the vision for the Area Action Plan, how should this be reflected in the objectives for the Plan?

4.20 The objectives could be developed in the form of specific strategic themes such as:

- creating a vibrant and viable town centre (mix of shopping, cultural, leisure activities supported by commercial, education and technology sectors);
- foremost retail centre in the sub region (retail provision and town centre status);
- creating a vibrant evening economy
- a centre of opportunity (employment generation);
- liveability (housing, safety and security);
- movement and accessibility (transport and connectivity);
- creating a first class environment (design and public realm);
- intellectual hub and higher education centre of excellence (education, culture and tourism);
- 'greening the centre' (environmental issues);
- making best use of land resources (development opportunities on strategic sites);
- implementation and monitoring.

4.21 These strategic themes would form the basis for future planning policy development in the next stage of plan preparation (Regulation 26).

Issue 4. Objectives for Southend Town Centre	
Issue	Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> what objectives should be adopted for the town centre in accordance with the vision (see Issue 3)? 	<p>4A: set objectives based on strategic themes as detailed in paragraph 4.20</p> <p>4B: set objectives based on other strategic themes. Please specify.</p> <p>4C: set objectives based on other criteria. Please specify.</p>

The Vitality and Viability of the Town Centre

4.22 Core Strategy Policy CP 2 identifies the importance of maintaining and promoting the vitality and viability of the town centre.

4.23 Vitality and viability lies at the heart of the Government’s approach to planning for town centres underpinned by retail, leisure and entertainment, office, and arts, cultural and tourism uses.

4.24 In addition to the quantity of floorspace it is important to maintain and enhance the quality of the retail offer; to provide for a range of related services; a quality public realm; an environment that feels, and is, safe; and is easy and convenient to access. In other words matters that ensure the centre is economically healthy and give it a ‘feel good factor’ and vibrancy.

4.25 PPS 6 provides that the health of the centre can be measured having regard to a number of factors including the number of vacant premises, rental values, commercial yields, pedestrian flows, safety, environmental quality and accessibility.

4.26 The issue of supporting vitality and viability is therefore multi-faceted given the range of uses in the town centre. The options that follow are diverse and reflect the importance of a joined up approach balancing the need for supporting existing retail uses and supporting the sustainable growth of the town centre. These include employment, housing, design, and transport issues.

4.27 One important element in achieving vitality in a town centre is improving the public realm - the areas between buildings - to provide for areas of distinctiveness and townscape quality that people can use safely to move between destinations and for relaxation and leisure purposes. Extensive improvements have already been made to the pedestrian areas in the High Street based on its existing thin linear form.

4.28 However, the Boro Happold report (see Chapter 2) for the town centre recommended a number of changes to improve the vitality and viability of the town centre, particularly in relation to improving the public realm. One of the more radical suggestions was the promotion of new urban forms not based on existing

building lines to create a central focus to the centre and provide for areas of distinctiveness. This included the provision of a new town square at the junction of the High Street and Tylers Avenue.

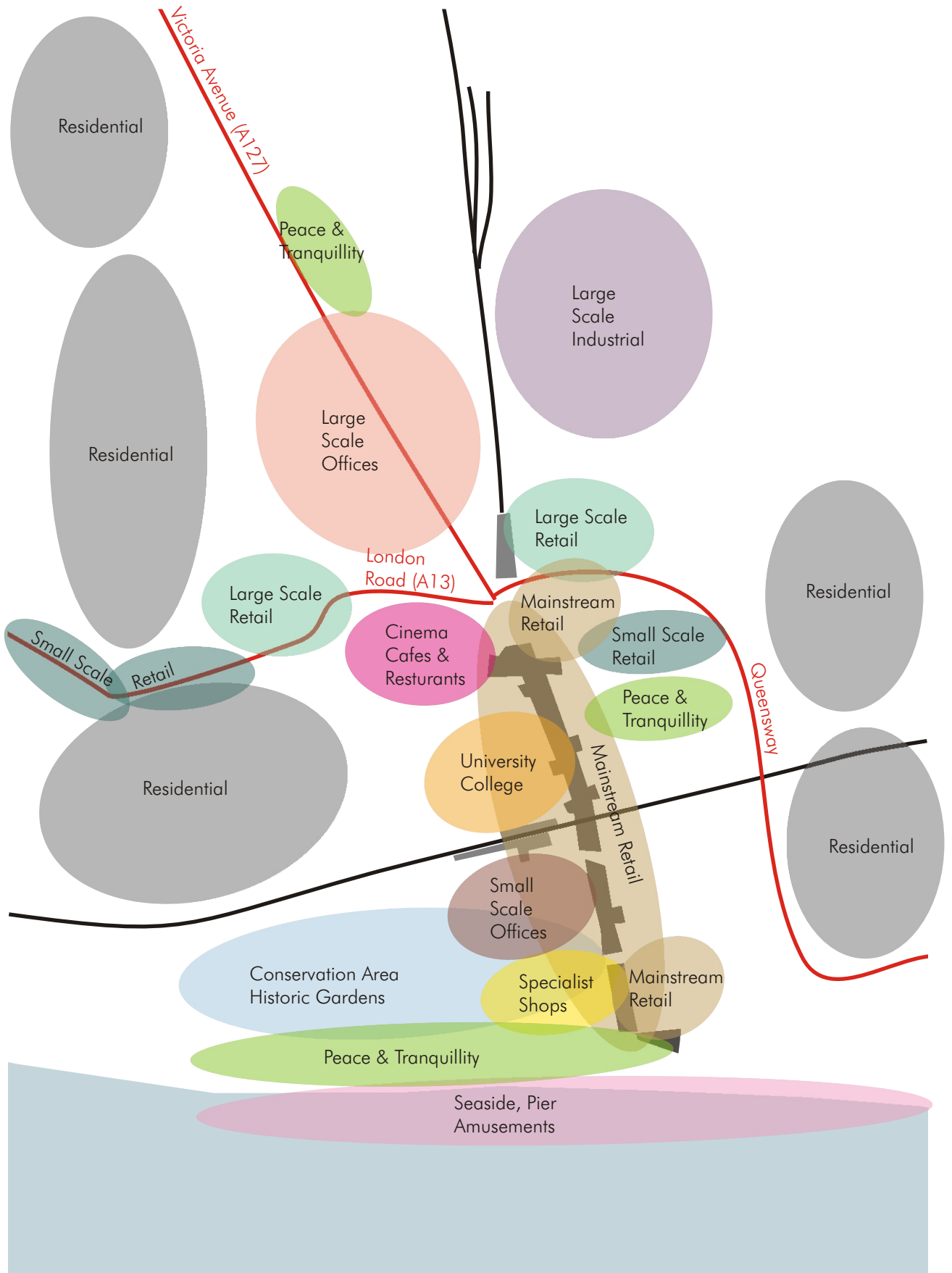
Issue 5: Vitality and Viability	
Issue	Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> should a bold policy approach be taken towards improving the vitality and viability of the town centre such as the provision of new public spaces within the town centre? 	<p>5A: retain current policy approach of improving the public realm based on existing building lines.</p> <p>5B: adopt a bold policy approach to promote and encourage new urban forms in the town centre. Please specify in what form and where such new public spaces should be.</p> <p>5C: treat such schemes on their merits having regard to design and other related criteria.</p>

Existing Character Zones

- 4.29 Within the town centre the physical barriers represented by the two railway lines and major highways together with the demarcation of the High Street and other minor routes, divide the central area into distinctive character zones (see **Map 4**).
- 4.30 Over the years some of these areas have tended to develop following specific themes such as the office quarter (Victoria Avenue), entertainment area (London Road) and education area (adjacent Central Station) etc.
- 4.31 As part of the future planning of the town centre should these zones be encouraged to develop further following their specific themes or should a more flexible approach be followed to achieve more mixed-use developments within these areas?
- 4.32 It should be noted that in considering this issue Government guidance positively encourages the provision of mixed-use developments in the interest of making best use of valuable land resources and improving the vitality and viability of town centres. This issue could affect current planning policy as set out in the Borough Local Plan which seeks to maintain a level of shopping use in retail frontages - see **Issue 8**.

Issue 6. Existing Character Zones (Map 4 refers)	
Issue	Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the town centre has distinctive character zones. These have tended to develop following specific themes. Should these be encouraged? 	<p>6A: develop planning policy to encourage the development of character zones within the town centre.</p> <p>6B: develop planning policy to encourage the development of only certain character zones. Please specify.</p> <p>6C: develop planning policy to provide for a more flexible approach across the town centre.</p>

Map 4: Existing Character Zones



Retail and Town Centre Status

Retail Provision

- 4.33 Core Strategy DPD policy for the town centre (Policy CP2) identifies the town centre as the first preference for all forms of retail development and other town centre uses attracting large numbers of people. It seeks to focus development in the town centre using a sequential approach (see paragraph 2.11).
- 4.34 Having regard to the findings of the 'Southend on Sea Retail Study' (2003)¹³, the Core Strategy policy advocates the provision of additional retail floorspace to meet forecast quantitative shopping needs and currently identified qualitative deficiencies.
- 4.35 Up to 21,000 square metres net of additional comparison goods floorspace is proposed within the town centre over the period to 2016. The policy provides that the locations to meet the majority of this need should be set out in this Area Action Plan.
- 4.36 The policy also provides for up to 5000 square metres net of additional convenience goods floorspace which should be focussed on the limited expansion in existing centres and by the provision of one new foodstore to meet an identified qualitative deficiency, the first preference for such a store being the town centre and the second preference within the area bounded by the town centre to the west, Southchurch Road (A13) to the north, Lifstan Way to the east, and Marine Parade/Eastern Esplanade to the south..
- 4.37 Up to 30,000 square metres net (including existing commitments) of additional bulky goods comparison floorspace is also proposed in Core Strategy Policy CP2. The policy provides that the first preference for such floorspace should be within or on the edge of the town centre.
- 4.38 Current adopted policy as set out in the Borough Local Plan identifies potential sites for new retail development in the town centre, namely Warrior Square (Proposal P5b), Tylers Avenue (Proposal P5c), Alexandra Street (Proposal P5d) and Seaway Car Park (Proposal P9k) – **see Annex 3** (Borough Local Plan Town Centre Inset).
- 4.39 This policy provision would also need to be related to **Issue 2** concerning the possibility of defining a Central Business District to which retail and commercial development would be directed.

¹³ Southend on Sea Retail Study (September 2003) – undertaken by CB Richard Ellis to assist the Borough Council in the preparation of its Local Development Framework.
Southend on Sea Local Development Framework
Town Centre Area Action Plan
Development Plan Document – January 2007

Issue 7. Retail Provision	
Issue	Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the town centre needs to accommodate additional retail floorspace to meet forecast quantitative shopping needs and currently identified qualitative deficiencies. Where should this development go? 	<p>7A: rely on existing site allocations for new retail development as set out in the Borough Local Plan and determine applications for additional retail developments on their merits using the sequential approach.</p> <p>7B: allocate new sites for retail development with regard to Core Strategy Policy CP 2 in order to plan for and accommodate all identified retail capacity. Please specify where you think these allocations should be (see also strategic development sites - Issues 29 to 39).</p> <p>7C: treat all applications for new retail development on their merits using the sequential approach and having regard to Issue 2 (Central Business District).</p>

Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontages

- 4.40 Current planning policy as set out in the Borough Local Plan¹⁴ seeks to control land uses in the central core of the town centre to maintain their character and vitality having regard to the Town and Country Planning Use Classes Order.
- 4.41 The Use Classes Order sets out in classes specific land uses where a change of use from one class to another may or may not require planning permission (see **Annex 4** for details). The Borough Local Plan seeks to ensure that 80% of the *prime shopping frontage* (measured in terms of length of frontage) remains in Class A1 retail uses (shops, travel agencies, hairdressers etc). It also seeks to ensure that no more than two single non-retail units (such as banks, building societies, restaurants and cafes) are located immediately adjacent each other.
- 4.42 However, where a use falls within Use Class A3 (restaurants and cafes) and is likely to sustain or increase the activity, interest and attractiveness of a shopping area, the policy provides for the possible relaxation of these limits subject to a planning condition prohibiting a change of use to Class A2 (financial and professional services such as banks, building societies, estate agents etc.).
- 4.43 More recent revisions to the Use Classes Order in 2005 have removed drinking establishments (now Class A4) and hot food takeaways (now Use Class A5) from Class A3 to provide for greater planning controls on the change of use. The current policy approach having regard to Borough Local Plan policy is to treat planning applications for A4 and A5 uses as if they were A3, however the former have varying implications for Environmental Health and parking issues.

¹⁴ Southend on Sea Borough Local Plan (March 1994), Policy S5 Non Retail Uses.
 Southend on Sea Local Development Framework
Town Centre Area Action Plan
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- 4.44 Prime shopping frontages are designated in the Borough Local Plan as mainly those located in the High Street, Royals and Victoria Plaza shopping centres (see **Annex 3**).
- 4.45 The Sutton Road local shopping area and parts of the streets spreading east and west from the High Street, such as Southchurch Road (between the High Street and Queensway), Queens Road, Clifftown Road, Alexandra Street and Chichester Road, are defined as *Secondary Shopping Frontages* where current policy provides that there will be no discrimination between shops and non retail uses. This provides for a more flexible approach to retail provision and has resulted in the provision of a number of restaurants, cafes and bars. However, in some locations it has also resulted in a clustering of banks and building societies.
- 4.46 The relaxation of this policy could also have a bearing on improving the evening economy of the town centre (see **Issue 9** below).

Issue 8: Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontages	
Issue	Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ in order to protect the vitality of the town centre current policy seeks to restrict uses in the primary shopping areas in order to retain their retail character. Should this policy be relaxed to encourage a greater mix of uses such as cafes and restaurants? 	<p>8A: Retain current Borough Local Plan policy distinction between primary and secondary shopping frontages and to restrict non-retail uses in primary frontages.</p> <p>8B: Relax policy to encourage the provision of cafes and restaurants in primary frontages (the High Street).</p> <p>8C: Amend policy to provide for further relaxation to current policy. Please specify.</p>

Potential for a More Vibrant Evening Economy

- 4.47 The introduction of cafes; restaurants; and bars; particularly in the side streets from the High Street, a multi-plex cinema and the new college and University campus have brought new life and vitality to the town centre, particularly at night time. However, many uses in the town centre close in the late afternoon and this can lead to a feeling that certain parts of the town centre 'die' at night leading to issues of safety and security.
- 4.48 There is considerable scope for the improvement and development of the evening economy in Southend town centre. This would improve the resident and visitor experience and its overall offer through the provision of additional facilities such as cafes, restaurants and related family facilities as identified in the Boro Happold Report and Town Centre Scrutiny Committee strategy (see Chapter 2).
- 4.49 Government guidance (PPS 6) encourages planning authorities to prepare planning policies to help manage the evening and night-time economy in appropriate centres. In doing this, guidance provides that local planning authorities should consider the scale of leisure developments they wish to encourage and their likely

impact, including the cumulative impact on the character and function of the centre.

- 4.50 Improving the evening economy can depend on a number of factors, some of which are outside planning control, such as other legislative requirements and market forces in determining the opening hours of establishments. It also raises issues of conflict in terms of the fear that it will generate noise and disturbance.
- 4.51 However, work and leisure patterns are changing and a town centre needs to adapt and keep pace with its competitors if it is to retain its viability and vitality. Careful management of land uses would give the Borough Council a tool to promote and manage the evening economy.

Issue 9. Potential for a More Vibrant Evening Economy	
Issue	Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ should the evening economy of the town centre be promoted to widen its offer and attractiveness to keep pace with its competitors? 	<p>9A: Do not provide for a specific town centre policy approach</p> <p>9B: Encourage evening economy uses as part of a mix of uses in specified locations</p> <p>9C: Concentrate evening economy uses in particular zones (see also Issue 6). Please specify.</p>

Employment Generating Development

Employment and Business Provision

- 4.52 The Core Strategy DPD in Policy CP1 provides that provision should be made for not less than 13,000 net additional jobs in the Borough by 2021 in accordance with the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS 14, Policy E2 - see Chapter 2) and national objectives for regeneration and growth in Thames Gateway. This will be essential to achieving jobs led regeneration and a sustainable balance between housing, jobs and infrastructure provision. Policy E4 in the RSS also provides that strategic employment sites of the appropriate quality and quantity will need to be identified in Development Plan Documents to meet the needs of business.
- 4.53 Such provision will be particularly crucial in the town centre where the economic well being of the centre underpins its vitality and viability and also the economic stability of the town. In addition, certain housing areas in the town centre have very high levels of deprivation and the unemployment rate for the town centre is 5.2%¹⁵, twice as high as the total for the Borough. This is reflected in the inclusion of the town centre within the designation for Objective 2 European funding. The provision of additional accessible jobs and training/education facilities within the town centre will assist in helping to remedy these issues.
- 4.54 Policy CP1 identifies this provision by time frame for the town centre as follows:

¹⁵ Data from claimant count levels collected by the Department for Works and Pensions (2005).
 Southend on Sea Local Development Framework
Town Centre Area Action Plan
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Employment Provision	2001-2011	2011-2016	2016-2021	2001-2021
Town Centre and Central Area	3,000	1,500	2,000	6,500
Borough Total	5,000	4,000	4,000	13,000
Per Annum	(500)	(800)	(400)	(650)

It also provides that proposals involving employment must contribute to the creation and retention of a wide range of jobs, educational and re-skilling opportunities.

- 4.55 In addition, Policy CP1 seeks to promote economic regeneration that:
- enhances the town's role as a cultural and intellectual hub, a higher education centre of excellence, visitor destination and cultural centre;
 - provides for the development and growth of appropriate technology and knowledge based industries, including the provision of business innovation/incubator centres and linkages to Higher Education and University facilities and existing centres of excellence;
 - improves opportunities for small and medium enterprises in all economic sectors;
 - support the town's regional potential to develop as a hotel and conference resort;
 - contribute to the regeneration and development of existing and proposed key employment sites including the town centre; and
 - improves the vitality and viability of Southend town centre.
- 4.56 The new college/university complex in the town centre has already started the process of improving the local skills base. Phase two of the campus development, the new University of Essex Southend building on the site of the old Odeon cinema in the High Street, is currently under construction. The two buildings will provide an academically integrated further and higher education campus and provide a range of facilities to support local businesses, including University academic departments such as health and business, and a Business Incubator/Innovation Centre (BIC) - see also **Issue 32**.
- 4.57 Probably the most significant challenge for this Area Action Plan is to put in place an appropriate detailed policy framework that meets the strategic policy objectives and jobs targets for the town centre. This will be essential to encouraging and promoting new innovative employment and business development that can provide the quality of jobs to retain people with locally developed skills.
- 4.58 The town centre currently contains a mix of employment uses throughout its centre concentrated on financial, business, real estate, catering, education and retail uses. The quality of this provision varies significantly throughout the centre from state of the art modern developments to obsolete empty office blocks and industrial premises. Victoria Avenue office district and Sutton Road industrial area are discussed further in **Issues 35 and 38**.
- 4.59 Existing employment policy, as contained in the Borough Local Plan, seeks to promote economic development in the town centre and direct major office

developments¹⁶ to a number of identified key sites. Some of these have now been developed but others, such as Whitegate Road (P4c), Pitmans Close (P4d), Central Station (P4k), Warrior Square (P5b), Tylers Avenue (P5c), and Alexandra Street (P5d), remain under used (**see Annex 3**). The Borough Local Plan does not have a specific jobs target.

Issue 10. Employment and Business Provision	
Issue	Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the town centre needs to accommodate additional employment and business development to provide for 6,500 net additional jobs to 2021. How should this development be promoted and where should it go? 	<p>10A: rely on existing site allocations for major new employment and business development as set out in the Borough Local Plan and determine other applications on their merits.</p> <p>10B: allocate new sites for employment and business development to accommodate all of the jobs target as set out in Core Strategy Policy CP 1. Please specify where you think these allocations should be (see also strategic development areas - Issues 29 to 39).</p> <p>10C: treat all applications for new employment and business development on their merits having regard to Issue 2 (Central Business District).</p>

Safeguarding Employment Land

- 4.60 PPG 4 seeks to ensure that sufficient land is protected for employment use. This is reflected in regional policy (RSS 14, Policy E3) and Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy DPD. The latter seeks to safeguard existing employment land and premises unless it can be clearly demonstrated that the proposal will contribute to the objective for jobs led regeneration in other ways, including significant enhancement of the environment, amenity and condition of the local area.
- 4.61 This follows a long standing policy objective initiated in the Borough Local Plan which safeguards existing major office premises (Policy E2) and allocated industrial sites (Policy E4) given the imbalance between workers and jobs and the limited land resources in the Borough. Exceptions are only considered where the proposal would bring clear benefits to the town in terms of jobs created and facilities provided. The only allocated industrial site in the vicinity of the town centre is to the west of Sutton Road.
- 4.62 However, there are certain existing employment uses in the town centre which are now obsolete for to days needs and may be more appropriately used for other uses to promote economic regeneration e.g. conversion of empty offices to student accommodation. This Area Action Plan needs to give detailed effect to the Core Strategy principles.

¹⁶ Borough Local Plan (1994) Policies E1 and E2. Major office developments are defined as those of more than 1,000m² floorspace.

Issue 11. Safeguarding Employment Land	
Issue	Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how should the policy objectives in Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy DPD to safeguard all employment land and premises whilst allowing for certain exceptions in the interests of promoting regeneration, be applied? 	<p>11A: safeguard existing major office land and premises and industrial site allocations as defined in the Borough Local Plan and allow exceptions only where other clear regeneration benefits are achieved (see also strategic development areas - Issues 29 to 39).</p> <p>11B: safeguard existing major employment land and premises and set out criteria/identify sites where particular exceptions may be made in the interests of promoting economic regeneration. Please specify where you think these sites should be.</p>

Secondary Offices

- 4.63 Current planning policy in the Borough Local Plan (Policy E3) identifies 'Secondary Office Frontages' on the town centre inset proposals map where secondary offices (1,000m² floorspace or less) are encouraged at ground floor level and above. These are located in Elmer Approach, part of Clifftown Road, Clarence Road, Weston Road, Clarence Street, and part of Alexandra Road (**see Annex 3**). Secondary office use may also be considered appropriate above primary and secondary shopping frontages (**see Issue 8**) except where this would result in an unacceptable impact on or loss of residential amenities.

Issue 12. Secondary Offices	
Issue	Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> should planning policy seek to direct secondary office uses within the town centre to specific locations? 	<p>12A: retain existing Borough Local Plan policy of defining 'Secondary Offices Frontages'.</p> <p>12B: allocate new designation to promote secondary office development in the town centre. Please define.</p> <p>12C: treat all applications for secondary office development on their merits having regard to design and other policy criteria to protect the retail core.</p>

Housing

Housing Provision

- 4.64 PPS 1 identifies that development plans should promote development that creates socially inclusive communities, with suitable mixes and types of housing, including affordable housing, which are also well designed, create a 'sense of place', minimise resource use and are well supported by infrastructure, facilities and services. Encouraging town centre residency also contributes significantly to the centres viability and vitality and to reducing crime through natural surveillance.

4.65 The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS 14) and Core Strategy reflect these principles and the need for housing growth as part of the Sustainable Communities Plan agenda for regeneration and growth in the Thames Gateway. Policy H1 of the RSS and Policy CP 8 of the Core Strategy DPD provide that provision should be made for 6,000 net additional dwellings in the Borough by 2021.

4.66 Policy CP1 identifies this provision by time frame for the town centre as follows:

Housing Provision	2001-2011	2011-2016	2016-2021	2001-2021
Town Centre and Central Area	650	750	250	1,650
Borough Total	2,750	1,650	1,600	6,000
Per Annum	(275)	(330)	(320)	(300)

4.67 The Regional Spatial Strategy also highlights the importance of broadly aligning this housing provision with economic growth to ensure the creation of a more sustainable balance between the number of workers and jobs and the need to provide for affordable housing to meet identified needs (Policies SS13).

4.68 Having regard to the Regional Spatial Strategy and recent housing research in the town, namely the 'Southend Housing Needs Survey' and 'Key Workers Study', Policy CP8 of the Core Strategy expects all residential development to contribute to local housing needs, including affordable and special needs provision¹⁷. In terms of the type of affordable housing required to meet identified need, the research suggests that there is a significant shortage of one and two bedroom homes in the owner occupied sector. Whilst the lack of local affordable housing is thought to be one factor contributing to recruitment problems within public sector organisations and as such there is likely to be some requirement for targeted housing provision.

4.69 To address these issues Policy CP8 provides that the Borough Council will:

- require:
 - all residential proposals of 10-24 dwellings or 0.3 - 1.0 hectare to make an affordable housing/key worker provision of not less than 2 dwelling units;
 - all residential proposals of 25 dwellings or 1 hectare or more to make an affordable housing/key worker provision of not less than 20% of the total number of units on the site; and
 - all residential proposals of 50 dwellings or 2 hectares or more to make an affordable housing/key worker provision of not less than 30% of the total number of units on the site;
- promote the provision of housing for key workers in partnership with major employers and registered social landlords;
- require residential development schemes within the Borough's town, district and local centres to include replacement and/or new retail and commercial uses, in order to maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of these shopping and commercial centres;

¹⁷ Housing Needs Survey (Fordham Research, May 2003) and Housing Needs Survey Update (Fordham Research, April 2004)

- support and require a vibrant mix of employment, residential and community uses on larger sites, to support greater economic and social diversity and sustainable transport principles.

4.70 The Town Centre Area Action Plan will need to give detail effect as to how these Core Strategy strategic provisions are to be applied and implemented within the town centre.

4.71 Current policy in the Borough Local Plan (Policy H1) does not seek to direct new housing to specific sites but does indicate that in considering retail proposals on sites at Warrior Square and Tylers Avenue residential development will be considered as part of mixed use developments (Proposals P5b and P5c).

Issue 13. Housing Provision	
Issue	Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the town centre needs to accommodate housing development to accommodate 1,650 net additional dwellings to 2021. Where should this development go? 	<p>13A: rely on existing site allocations for major new town centre development as set out in the Borough Local Plan and determine other applications on their merits having regard to design and other related criteria.</p> <p>13B: allocate new sites for housing development to accommodate all/majority of the housing target as set out in Core Strategy Policy CP8. Please specify where you think these allocations should be (see also strategic development areas - Issues 29 to 39).</p> <p>13C: treat all applications for new housing on their merits having regard to design and other related criteria.</p>

Safeguarding Residential Uses

4.72 Policy CP 8 of the Core Strategy DPD also seeks to 'resist development proposals that involve the loss of existing valuable residential resources' having regard to the limited land resources in the Borough and the need to protect the character and amenities of residential areas.

4.73 This principle follows a well-established policy framework set out in the Borough Local Plan (Policy H4) which seeks to safeguard residential uses subject to certain exceptions. In addition, the Borough Local Plan seeks to safeguard small family dwellinghouses (of 125m² or less) from conversion to flats in order to retain an adequate stock of such family housing to meet specific needs (Policy H3).

Issue 14. Safeguarding Residential Uses	
Issue	Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how should the policy objectives in Policy CP8 to resist development proposals that involve the loss of existing valuable residential resources be applied in the town centre? 	<p>14A: safeguard residential uses as defined in the Borough Local Plan and allow exceptions only in special circumstances.</p> <p>14B: safeguard residential uses but provide for a more flexible approach within the central business district (see Issue 2) in the interests of promoting regeneration.</p> <p>14C: treat all schemes involving the loss of residential uses on their merits having regard to housing needs, design and other related criteria.</p>

Flat Developments

- 4.74 Current policy in the Borough Local Plan seeks to control the amount of flat development across the Borough, including sheltered housing and non-self contained flat development (Houses in Multiple Occupation). This is to ensure that the character and amenities of residential areas is protected and that they remain attractive for single family housing use (Policies H6 (First Alteration), H7, H8 and H9 (First Alteration)). This is principally achieved by limiting flat development to 10% of the street frontage.

Issue 15. Flat Developments	
Issue	Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> should the amount of flat development in the town centre be controlled to retain the character of residential streets? 	<p>15A: control the amount of flat development in accordance with the principles established in the Borough Local Plan.</p> <p>15B: control flat development in residential streets adjoining the town centre but provide for a more flexible approach within the central business district (see Issue 2) in the interests of promoting regeneration.</p> <p>15C: treat all flat development schemes on their merits having regard to housing needs, design and other related criteria.</p>

Transport

- 4.75 Good accessibility to the town centre is crucial to its economic viability and regeneration. The town centre should be accessible by a range of modes of transport providing safe seamless travel facilities, particularly sustainable transport by bus, rail, cycling and walking. It should also be easily accessible to all members of the community. This will include travel involving service deliveries, business, shopping and leisure trips. Access to the town centre by car needs to be managed as part of an integrated town centre transport strategy to improve access to essential routes such as car parks and to reduce congestion.

- 4.76 The transport nodes in the town centre also represent its 'Gateways', the first view and experience many will have on arriving in the centre. This experience needs to be good if businessmen, shoppers and visitors are to make return visits. The 'Gateway' can include car parks, railway stations, the new travel centre, enhanced bus stops and coach parks. Some of the town's gateways currently offer poor facilities and an unwelcoming environment. The connectivity between the gateways and with the town centre is also currently poor in some locations although improvements are underway. The exception is the old bus station which has recently been replaced by a modern purpose built Travel Centre delivered as part of the LTP Major Scheme. Ongoing works at Victoria Station/Victoria Plaza also seek to reduce these deficiencies.
- 4.77 The current transport provisions for the town centre is set out in LTP2 (see Chapter 2 and **Annex 2**). It seeks to address the above issues by:
- the provision of an integrated network of inter-urban buses (South Essex Rapid Transit - SERT);
 - extension of A13 Passenger Transport Corridor into the town centre linking with the travel centre, east Southend and the Airport;
 - improvements at the railway stations (Southend Central and Southend Victoria) to provide for integrated and improved facilities, including the concept of a shuttle bus link;
 - junction improvements at A127 (with Fairfax Drive and West Road) and Victoria Circus;
 - park and ride facilities as part of a demand management strategy;
 - development of the second phase of the Travel Centre; and
 - improved cycling and pedestrian facilities and completion of the cycle network routes into and through the town centre.

Not all of these schemes will be funded through the LTP provisions and alternative sources of funding will need to be secured such as developer contributions (Section 106 agreements)¹⁸, European funding and Transport Innovation Fund (TIF)¹⁹.

- 4.78 Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy DPD provides the strategic planning policy framework for delivering these provisions.
- 4.79 The development of detailed planning policies to address accessibility issues outside the town centre, for example on the A127, will be dealt with in the Criteria Based Policies and Site Allocations Development Plan Document which will provide policy coverage for the rest of the Borough (DPD 5 - **see Diagram 1**).
- 4.80 This Area Action Plan needs to put in place the appropriate detailed planning policy framework to address the transport issues facing the town centre. Vehicle and

¹⁸ Planning Obligations and Vehicle Parking Standards DPD 2 sets out criteria for developer contributions. It forms one of the suite of plans making up the Southend Local Development Framework

¹⁹ TIF (transport Innovation Fund) – Government fund aimed at directing resources towards tackling congestion and improving national productivity. Local Authorities bid for such resources. Southend on Sea Local Development Framework

cycle parking standards for development schemes are set out in the Development Plan Document DPD2 - *Planning Obligations and Vehicle Parking Standards*.

Public Transport

- 4.81 LTP2 seeks to develop further the Passenger Transport Corridor from the A13 into the town centre and linking out to east Southend and the Airport. It also seeks to introduce a 'hoppa' type bus service linking the railway stations, travel centre and seafront.
- 4.82 Ambitious plans are also being investigated for developing in the longer term a state of the art urban transit system across Thames Gateway South Essex (South Essex Rapid Transit - SERT). This system would serve the town centre and its hinterland. A concept statement has recently been produced relating to this proposal (see www.sert.org.uk).
- 4.83 In planning for such schemes it is important to safeguard corridors of movement and to ensure that future strategic and local development schemes aligning the route fully embrace their provisions. In this respect Chichester Road in the town centre offers the potential to function as the public transport artery into the town centre with the reallocation of road space and improvements to pedestrian and cycling facilities.
- 4.84 Current planning policy in the Borough Local Plan merely seeks to secure improvements to public transport services (Policy T14).

Issue 16: Public Transport	
Issue	Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ what route should the passenger transport corridor/urban transit system follow to link transport nodes and major land uses in the town centre? ▪ should certain routes/part of routes be reserved for passenger transport movements to improve their reliability and viability? 	<p>16A: safeguard a route linking London Road, Queensway, Chichester Road, Queensway and the Seafront (as set out in LTP2 - see Annex 3).</p> <p>16B: safeguard a route linking London Road, Queensway, Chichester Road, Queensway and the Seafront to include priority routes/access for buses.</p> <p>16C: safeguard an alternative route. Please specify.</p>

Park and Ride

- 4.85 The adopted Local Transport Plan (LTP2) identifies the potential for 'park and ride' facilities on the periphery of the town (Arterial Road and Southend Airport - bus and Leigh Station - rail). These would serve the town centre as part of the development of a future traffic management strategy aimed at reducing congestion and promoting more sustainable means of travel to the town centre.
- 4.86 The proposals would need to be developed having regard to their impact on the economic viability and vitality of the town centre and their success would be

dependent on a quality of service and reliability that could effectively compete with car use.

Issue 17: Park and Ride	
Issue	Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ should provision be made to develop park and ride facilities to serve the town centre? 	<p>17A: do not develop specific policy provisions.</p> <p>17B: develop specific policy provisions to pave the way for the introduction of such a facility.</p> <p>17C: treat such schemes on their merits having regard to other related policy criteria (see Issue 16).</p>

Interchanges

- 4.87 The draft East of England Regional Plan identifies Southend town centre as a Regional Interchange Centre (RIC). This includes the interchanges of Southend Victoria and Southend Central Railway stations and the new Travel Centre. It also potentially includes a new interchange on the seafront to incorporate water based links (e.g. hovercraft) as identified in the LTP 2 strategy.
- 4.88 Facilities at the railway stations are currently limited and connectivity between them and the new Travel Centre are generally poor. However, improvements are currently underway, and there remains scope for further enhancements. In particular, a start on improving the linkages between Victoria Station and the town centre is currently being made as part of the SustAccess European funded scheme linked with the Victoria Plaza refurbishment.
- 4.89 The new Travel Centre has provided for significant improvement in bus passenger transport facilities. Phase 2 of the scheme to meet future bus passenger demands and movements will be required to be planned as part of the Area Action Plan's provisions - **see Issue 30**.
- 4.90 Existing policy as set out in the Borough Local Plan seeks to improve facilities at the interchanges in order to promote accessibility by public transport (Policy T15). Increased car parking at the railway stations in the town centre is discouraged in the interests of preventing commuter parking and promoting more sustainable travel patterns (Policy T16).

Issue 18: Interchanges	
Issue	Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ how should policy provide for improvements at interchanges and improved linkages between them? 	<p>18A: retain current Borough Local Plan provisions</p> <p>18B: develop specific principles to promote improved facilities and linkages. Please specify what you consider these should be.</p> <p>18C: other provisions. Please specify.</p>

Car Parking

4.91 The town centre currently has extensive car parking provision both off-street in multi storey car parks and surface car parks in public and private ownership and on-street parking facilities.

Off Street Car Parking Facilities

4.92 The quality of the town centre car parks varies considerably and many offer opportunities for maximising their development potential through redevelopment to provide for mixed use developments incorporating replacement car parking.

4.93 Current policy set out in the Borough Local Plan promotes the provision of additional off street parking facilities within the central business district (Policy T9) and the redevelopment of car parks at Tylers Avenue and Warrior Square where replacement car parking is provided (Proposals P5b and P5c). However, since the adoption of the Borough Local Plan Government planning policy promotes more sustainable modes of travel in preference to additional car parking facilities.

Issue 19: Car Parking - Off Street	
Issue	Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ are the current car parking facilities (long term and short term) appropriate to meet the future needs of the town centre as a major regional shopping centre and leisure destination? 	<p>19A: retain current provision</p> <p>19B: promote the provision of additional facilities in accordance with current Borough Local Plan policy. Please specify where you think these should be.</p> <p>19C: rationalise facilities to maximise development value and provide for improved replacement car parking facilities in appropriate locations. Please specify preferred locations.</p>

On-Street Parking Facilities

4.94 On street parking facilities within the town centre are controlled to promote short stay provision to encourage shoppers and visitors and deter commuter parking. However, at the commercial edges of the town centre conflict occurs between visitor parking and residential parking needs. This is currently recognised in existing policy contained in the Borough Local Plan (Policy T10) which seeks to keep under review opportunities for making environmental improvements in residential areas.

4.95 More recently opportunities for introducing residents car parking within areas of Milton to the north west of the High Street were investigated. However, the scheme was not pursued due to the lack of local community support for a viable residents parking scheme.

Issue 20: Car Parking - On Street	
Issue	Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ how should conflict between residents car parking needs and town centre parking be resolved? 	<p>20A: retain the current status quo</p> <p>20B: promote the provision of some form of residents parking provision in future policy in the interest of protecting residential amenity and character.</p> <p>20C: other option. Please specify.</p>

Traffic Management (Environmental Rooms and Distributors)

- 4.96 The Local Transport Plan as part of its strategy sets out the concept of Environmental Rooms and Distributors. This provides for a rationale across the Borough for the movement of traffic on 'distributors' whose main function is to distribute traffic where obstructions should be kept to a minimum. Those areas bounded by distributors are identified as 'environmental rooms' within which the quality of the local environment will have priority.
- 4.97 Within the town centre London Road, Victoria Avenue and Queensway are identified as 'Primary Distributor ' routes where the predominant use is traffic accessing the centre and scheduled bus services. Sutton Road and Southchurch Road are identified as 'Secondary Distributor' routes where the main use is local traffic and scheduled bus services. London Road, Victoria Avenue and Chichester Road form part of the proposed Passenger Transport Corridor linking the town centre to Leigh, east Southend and the Airport (**see Annex 2**).

Issue 21: Traffic Management	
Issue	Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how should traffic in the town centre be effectively managed and the environment of adjoining residential areas be protected and enhanced? 	<p>21A: base future planning policy on current route hierarchy as set out in Local Transport Plan</p> <p>21B: adapt route hierarchy to include additional traffic management measures. Please specify.</p> <p>21C: other options. Please specify.</p>

Cycling and Walking

- 4.98 A number of significant improvements have been made to cycling and walking in the town centre with the aid of European and Local Transport Plan funding. This has included resurfacing of the entire High Street, improved lighting, cycle parking facilities and the provision of new cycle ways through the centre linking Victoria Avenue and the seafront via Pier Hill in accordance with the adopted cycle network as set out in the Local Transport Plan.
- 4.99 A major issue for pedestrians is the severance caused by the Primary Distributor Roads (London Road and Queensway) which act as a major barrier to movement between residential areas/ transport gateways (Southend Victoria Railway Station and key bus stops) and the town centre.

Issue 22: Cycling and Walking	
Issue	Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ how should policy seek to further improve cycling and walking facilities in the town centre? 	<p>22A: seek improvements on an ad hoc basis as resources permit having regard to the LTP strategy and cycle network.</p> <p>22B: prioritise improvements. Please specify schemes.</p> <p>22C: other options. Please specify.</p>

Urban Design, Open Space and Conservation

Design Policy

4.100 The good design of buildings and public spaces together with quality landscaping and the provision of public art is an important ingredient to achieving a successful, safe and vibrant town centres and to achieving sustainable development.

4.101 PPS 1²⁰ provides that good design should:

- address the connections between people and places by considering the needs of people to access jobs and key services;
- be integrated into the existing urban form and the natural and built environment;
- be an integral part of the process for ensuring successful, safe and inclusive towns and cities;
- create an environment where everyone can access and benefit from the full range of opportunities available.

4.102 The development of the new University complex, travel centre and Pier Hill, incorporating public art, as part of the regeneration process, have already introduced buildings and a public realm of quality design and cutting edge architecture. Extensive improvements have also been made to the public realm within the High Street to provide for improved pedestrian facilities in the form of quality paving, hard landscaping and lighting. CCTV provision throughout the town centre has led to improved security and reduced the fear of crime.

4.103 These initiatives need to be built upon to provide for further developments of quality design to provide for places of distinctiveness and character to create a sense of place. Good design also needs to provide for safe corridors of movement, particularly between key transport nodes and services, and improvements to accessibility.

4.104 The Borough Council as part of the suite of plans making up the Local Development Framework has already adopted a comprehensive design and townscape guide. This has been prepared in the form of a Supplementary Planning Document and illustrates how Policy KP2 in the Core Strategy DPD should be

²⁰ Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS 1) Delivering Sustainable Development, 2005
 Southend on Sea Local Development Framework
Town Centre Area Action Plan
Development Plan Document – January 2007

achieved in relation to 'securing improvements to the urban environment through quality design'. Policy KP4 of the Core Strategy also provides for 'quality in the public realm through the use of imaginative and innovative design, sustainable and quality materials and landscaping and imaginative use of public art'.

4.105 The Design Guide comprehensively covers general design matters and also specific types of development, some of which are of particular relevance to the town centre such as shop and commercial fascias, advertisements and hoardings, listed buildings and conservation areas, street furniture and landscaping. These matters are currently covered by a number of policies contained in the Borough Local Plan. It will be important that this Area Action Plan provides an appropriate detailed policy framework to deliver the guidance and principles set out in the design guide as once adopted it will replace the Borough Local Plan's policy provisions.

Issue 23: Design Policy	
Issue	Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ how should urban design policy for the town centre be developed? 	<p>23A: retain specific design policies for different types of development (eg shop fronts, listed buildings etc.) similar to that as currently set out in the Borough Local Plan.</p> <p>23B: develop criteria based policy approach setting out design principles to which development should adhere in accordance with recently adopted design guidance.</p> <p>23C: develop design criteria for specific key development sites (see Issues 29 to 39) in addition to 23B.</p> <p>23D: develop design policy based on different approach. Please specify.</p>

Frontages of Townscape Merit

4.106 The current Borough Local Plan also seeks to protect 'Frontages of Townscape Merit' in the town centre²¹. These are frontages not protected by other conservation measures but contribute significantly to the quality of the local townscape by their architectural character as a group and their prominence in the street scene.

4.107 The frontages of townscape merit contained in the Borough Local Plan includes the upper floor frontages of a number of premises on the eastern side of the High Street, in Clifftown Road, Clarence Road, Clarence Street, Weston Road and Alexandra Street.

Issue 24: Frontages of Townscape Merit	
Issue	Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ should the principle of protecting frontages of townscape merit be retained in the Area Action Plan. 	<p>24A: retain the principle of frontages of townscape merit.</p> <p>24B: do not provide for a specific policy approach.</p>

²¹ Southend on Sea Borough Local Plan - Policy C6
 Southend on Sea Local Development Framework
Town Centre Area Action Plan
Development Plan Document – January 2007

Tall Buildings

- 4.108 The town centre has a varying and distinctive skyline containing some of the Borough's tallest buildings. Tall buildings can have a major impact on the design and environment of the town centre and it will be essential to ensure that in considering similar development proposals in the future they are only permitted where a positive beneficial impact is achieved.
- 4.109 Recently adopted Supplementary Design Guidance provides that high quality tall buildings in the right place can act as landmarks and be an opportunity to enrich the public realm by creating new internal and external public spaces. However, the guidance notes that they are not always appropriate and it is important to establish whether the principle of a high building is acceptable before considering the detail. Clusters of tall buildings may be appropriate in the town centre but will not normally be appropriate in sensitive historic and/or residential locations or where they would adversely impact on a key public view.

Issue 25: Tall Buildings	
Issue	Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ should a specific policy approach be taken to the location and design of tall buildings in the town centre? 	<p>25A: retain existing policy approach of defining appropriate heights of buildings on key development sites and treating other proposals on their merits.</p> <p>25B: develop a specific tall buildings policy for the town centre.</p> <p>25C: determine such proposals on their merits having regard to design and other related guidance and criteria.</p>

Open Space and Landscaping

- 4.110 The town centre, although lying adjacent extensive areas of public open space at its southern end on the foreshore and Churchill Gardens and Priory Park to the north, has within its core only one limited area of open space, namely at Warrior Square. This 0.5 hectare site lies on the edge of the High Street within the Warrior Square Conservation Area. It has poor access, is of poor quality and represents an under used facility. The provision of tree planting and landscaping is also limited in the town centre's main streets.
- 4.111 The lack of greenery and green open space facilities gives the town centre a hard urban edge and limits the opportunities for passive recreation to escape the hustle and bustle of the town centre.
- 4.112 Regional Planning Policy (TG/SE 4) and Core Strategy DPD Policy CP7 provides that development must contribute to sports, recreation and green space and support the development of a 'Green Grid' of open spaces and associated linkages throughout Thames Gateway South Essex.

4.113 The Green Grid concept provides the opportunity to develop a network of greenways across the town linking and improving existing open space facilities. The concept will be developed in detail as part of the preparation of Supplementary Planning Guidance (Open Space and Green Grid Strategy - SPD 2). The Green Grid provides the opportunity for establishing links across the town centre linking parks and other public areas and urban squares. This would provide a focus for improved landscaping, street furniture and other measures to enhance the pedestrian and urban environment.

Issue 26: Open Space	
Issue	Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ how should public open space be provided in the town centre? ▪ should the Green Grid concept be developed to provide for a 'green lung' through the town centre linking open spaces? 	<p>26A: retain existing policy approach of safeguarding existing open space facilities only.</p> <p>26B: develop policy to promote the development of additional public open space. Please specify where you think this should be.</p> <p>26C: develop specific policy for the town centre to promote the concept of the 'Green Grid' in the town centre.</p>

Education, Culture and Tourism

4.114 The provision of education, cultural (such as the arts, museums and libraries) and tourism facilities (particularly hotels) in the town centre can add to its wider offer and vitality. They can act as a catalyst to stimulate further investment and in promoting urban regeneration and renaissance. These benefits are already being realised with the development of the college/university in the town centre.

4.115 These matters are reflected in the Core Strategy DPD. Policy CP1 provides that in order to promote economic regeneration, development will be expected to:

'enhance the town's role as a cultural and intellectual hub, a higher education centre of excellence, visitor destination and cultural centre,' whilst Policy CP6 seeks to secure 'the physical infrastructure needed to maximise the impact of the Higher Education/University Campus in the town centre'.

4.116 The Area Action Plan will need to embrace these issues to provide an appropriate policy framework for promoting and guiding the provision of appropriate further education, cultural and tourism facilities in the town centre.

4.117 Current planning policy in the Borough Local Plan seeks to retain existing entertainment, cultural and arts facilities and encourage the provision of new ones in support of local arts organisations, in particular the establishment of a central community arts centre (Policy L5). The latter has never been achieved. In relation to hotels, policy seeks to retain an adequate stock of accommodation and to promote new facilities in the existing tourist areas on the seafront or where the proposal is well related to the primary road network, subject to safeguards concerning

protection of local amenities (Policies L 6, 7 and 8). Policies for new education facilities are more related to small scale school developments and seek to ensure that local amenities and facilities are protected (Policies U7 and U8).

Issue 27: Education, Culture and Tourism	
Issue	Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ how should planning policy promote the wider benefits of quality education, culture and tourism facilities in the town centre? 	<p>27A: develop specific policy criteria to promote the development of additional education, culture and tourism facilities in the town centre.</p> <p>27B: develop specific policy criteria to promote the development of additional education, culture and tourism facilities in the town centre and identify appropriate sites (see also Issues 29 to 39). Please specify which sites you consider appropriate</p> <p>27C: treat such schemes on their merits having regard to design and other related criteria and the central business district boundary (see Issue 2).</p>

Environment

Renewable and Recycled Resources

4.118 In addition to design issues, Policy KP2 of the Core Strategy DPD requires all new development to be sited, laid out and designed in such a way that it reduces the use of natural resources and promotes the use of renewals in accordance with Government guidance. New policy in the Town Centre Area Action Plan will need to give detailed effect to these provisions.

Environment of Residential Areas

4.119 It will also be important to ensure that in considering the provision of town centre uses the amenities of adjoining residential properties is appropriately safeguarded. This will be achieved to a large extent by directing such uses to the Central Business District (**see Issue 2**).

4.120 The Borough Local Plan currently seeks to protect adjoining residential areas by the redevelopment of incompatible uses, the re-use of vacant or derelict land, traffic calming, landscaping and other appropriate measures (Policy H12 and H13).

Issue 28: Environment of Residential Areas	
Issue	Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ should the Area Action Plan contain specific policy to safeguard and enhance adjoining residential areas outside the Central Business District (see Issue 2)? 	<p>28A: retain current policy provisions set out in Borough Local Plan.</p> <p>28B: develop new policy provisions having regard to the Environmental Room provisions (see Issue 21).</p> <p>28C: treat all schemes on their merits having regard to design and other related criteria</p>

Strategic Development Sites

- 4.121 A number of strategic development sites in the town centre provide opportunities to make a significant contribution to the regeneration process, particularly in terms of generating additional jobs and improving the town centre 'offer', quality of the environment and public realm. These are set out below (see Map 5). With the exception of Farringdon, Victoria Station, Victoria Avenue Civic Area and Southchurch Road, all the sites are identified in the Borough Local Plan as having redevelopment potential.
- 4.122 The sites included are based on the premise that a wider Town Centre Area Action Plan boundary is chosen - see Issue 1 (Map 3). However, should a boundary be chosen that is more closely based on the central core, than some of the more peripheral sites noted below would fall outside the boundary and would therefore **not be included** in the Town Centre Area Action Plan.
- 4.123 This list is not intended to be exhaustive. If you consider there are other sites in the town centre that should be subject to specific policy provisions in order to guide and promote future development decisions please specify under Issue 41 below.

Market Place

4.124 This area to the west of the southern end of the High Street is currently occupied by a small surface public car park and a number of small retail/commercial premises in a mews setting. The site offers the potential to widen the retail and leisure offer of the town centre in an enhanced environment.

Issue 29: Market Place	
Issue	Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ how should planning policy be developed to realise the full development potential of the Market Place area? 	<p>29A: develop policy to retain the area principally in its current form</p> <p>29B: redevelop for more modern retail units and offices with rooftop car parking as per Borough Local Plan provisions (Proposal P5d)</p> <p>29C: regenerate the area based on its existing mews format with small-scale specialist retail and leisure uses and possible new market facility.</p> <p>29D: other potential. Please specify.</p>

Tylers Avenue

4.125 This site lies to the east of the southern end of the High Street (approx. 1.7 hectares). It encompasses a public surface car park, retail market and retail/commercial premises in York Road. The new Travel Centre abuts the southern boundary of the site and County Court building (Dencora Court) the northern boundary. It is proposed that Phase 2 of the Travel Centre would be incorporated into the site as part of a comprehensive redevelopment scheme.

4.126 The site offers the potential to make a significant contribution towards the regeneration of the town centre.

Issue 30: Tylers Avenue	
Issue	Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ how should planning policy be developed to realise the full development potential of the Tylers Avenue area? ▪ in considering such proposals, should the York Road Market be incorporated within the site or be relocated to another site in the town centre? 	<p>30A: develop policy to retain the area principally in its current form.</p> <p>30B: improve alignment of Chichester Road and redevelop for retail with replacement public car parking and public transport facilities and potentially office floorspace and covered market in accordance with Borough Local Plan provisions (Proposal P5c).</p> <p>30C: redevelop for mixed use scheme comprising retail, housing and car parking incorporating phase 2 of the Travel Centre and possibly community facilities.</p> <p>30D: other potential. Please specify.</p>

Warrior Square

4.127 The site is situated to the east of the northern end of the High Street (approx. 1.9 hectares). It comprises a surface public car park, commercial premises, residential fronting Whitegate Road and the 'Warriors' swimming pool. The site lies adjacent the only area of open green space near the High Street and the Warrior Square Conservation Area. Any redevelopment proposal would need to have regard to the environmental sensitivity of this area and to maximise the use/ enhance the open space facilities. It is currently proposed to relocate the swimming pool facility to Garons Leisure Centre at Eastern Avenue to the north of the town.

4.128 The site offers the potential to make a significant contribution towards the regeneration of the town centre.

Issue 31: Warrior Square	
Issue	Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ how should planning policy be developed to realise the full development potential of the Warrior Square area? 	<p>31A: develop policy to retain the area principally in its current form.</p> <p>31B: redevelop for mixed use comprising retail, housing, offices, hotel with multi level car parking (maximum of 4 floors to relate to property in Conservation Area) in accordance with Borough Local Plan provisions (Proposal P5b).</p> <p>31C: redevelop for mixed use scheme of retail, housing, leisure and car parking facilities and possibly additional university facilities.</p> <p>31D: other potential. Please specify</p>

Map 5: Strategic Development Sites



Issue No.	Location
29	Market Place
30	Tylers Avenue
31	Warrior Square
32	Farringdon
33	London Road
34	Victoria Station / Victoria Plaza
35	Victoria Avenue Office District
36	Victoria Avenue Civic Area
37	Southchurch Road
38	Sutton Road Commercial / Industrial Area
39	Roots Hall Football Ground, Victoria Avenue

Note: Dependant on the boundary chosen for the Area Action Plan (see issue 1) some of the above sites may not be included in the Town

Farringdon

4.129 To the west of the northern end of the High Street is Farringdon multi storey public car park and adjoining surface car parking facilities. The site lies adjacent the new college/university facilities developed/being developed in Luker Road. The car park is in a poor structural condition and offers the potential for redevelopment subject to the replacement of car parking facilities elsewhere.

Issue 32: Farringdon	
Issue	Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how should planning policy be developed to realise the full development potential of the Farringdon area? 	<p>32A: develop policy to retain the area principally for car parking purposes</p> <p>32B: relocate car parking facilities and redevelop as an extension to the University campus.</p> <p>32C: other potential. Please specify</p>

London Road (Queensway/High Street)

4.130 London Road between Queensway and the High Street serves a major food store and provides access to commercial premises and the new college/university via College Way/Elmer Avenue. At its eastern end a number of bars and cafes have been established. The highway currently dominates the area.

4.131 There is significant potential to enhance the environment and public realm facilities in this area. Current Borough Local Plan policy seeks to pedestrianise this area (Proposal P9b).

Issue 33: London Road (Queensway/High Street)	
Issue	Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ how should planning policy be developed to improve the environment of London Road (between the High Street and Queensway)? 	<p>33A: develop policy to retain the area principally in its current format.</p> <p>33B: pedestrianise London Road from the High Street to Elmer Approach to create a piazza to promote leisure uses in the area and enhance the environment.</p> <p>33C: other potential. Please specify.</p>

Southend Victoria Railway Station

4.132 Southend Victoria Railway Station is a major gateway into the town centre. It currently has limited facilities and poor pedestrian links to the town centre. Improvement works as part of the SustAccess project and Victoria Plaza refurbishment will provide for some improvements to accessibility.

4.133 However, combined with the adjacent land currently occupied by a bulky goods retail store, youth centre and transport police office, there is the potential to achieve a comprehensive redevelopment scheme to realise the full potential of this site and to further enhance accessibility, public facilities and the public realm. Any scheme

would need to provide alternative youth facilities and to cater for transport police needs.

Issue 34: Southend Victoria Railway Station	
Issue	Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ how should planning policy be developed to realise the full development potential of land at/adjacent the Southend Victoria Railway Station? 	<p>34A: develop policy to retain the area principally in its current form.</p> <p>34B: comprehensively redevelop to improve transport interchange and public realm facilities and provide for mixed use development of retail, offices, hotel and residential</p> <p>34C: other potential. Please specify.</p>

Victoria Avenue Office District

4.134 Victoria Avenue contains a number of major office developments on its western side. The majority of these were built in the late 1960's and are outmoded for to-days hi-tech requirements. A number of the units are currently empty. The area offers considerable potential for contributing to the regeneration needs of the town.

4.135 Due to the strategic importance and location of this site in meeting the wider economic regeneration needs of the town, the Borough Council has sought to achieve residential development at the northern end of the site for affordable key worker housing with the support of Government funding.

Issue 35: Victoria Avenue Office District	
Issue	Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ how should planning policy be developed to realise the full development potential of the Victoria Avenue office district? 	<p>35A: develop policy to retain the area principally in its current format in accordance with Borough Local Plan provisions</p> <p>35B: redevelop part of the site to meet affordable housing needs. Please specify.</p> <p>35C: other potential. Please specify.</p>

Victoria Avenue Civic Area

4.136 The eastern side of Victoria Avenue is currently dominated by a range of public buildings - Central Museum, Central Library, Magistrates Court, Police Station and Civic Centre - alongside surface and low level multi storey public car parking. Many of these facilities are unsuitable for to-days service delivery.

4.137 Subject to the provision of alternative public facilities, the site offers the potential to improve a key gateway to the town centre maximising links with the adjacent Victoria Railway Station.

Issue 36: Victoria Avenue Civic Area	
Issue	Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how should planning policy be developed to realise the full development potential of the Victoria Avenue Civic Area? 	<p>36A: develop policy to retain the area principally in its current format in accordance with Borough Local Plan provisions</p> <p>36B: relocate some civic/community uses to more central location and redevelop site for housing and office/commercial use</p> <p>36C: other potential. Please specify.</p>

Southchurch Road (High Street/Queensway)

4.138 Southchurch Road (between High Street and Queensway) is currently a low quality secondary shopping area, dominated by two-way traffic and no key arrival or destination point drawing people either into or from the High Street. The east of the road does, however, benefit from excellent road access from Queensway.

Issue 37: Southchurch Road (High Street/Queensway)	
Issue	Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how should planning policy be developed to improve the environment and offer of Southchurch Road (between Queensway and the High Street)? 	<p>37A: develop policy to retain the area principally in its current format</p> <p>37B: develop a specific programme of environmental enhancements and improvements. Please specify.</p> <p>37C: other potential. Please specify.</p>

Sutton Road Commercial/Industrial Area

4.139 Situated between the railway line and Sutton Road lies the Grainger Road Industrial Estate and Greyhound Retail Park. Current Borough Local Plan policy seeks to retain the industrial area in order to safeguard an appropriate supply of employment land. However, parts of the estate contains ageing and obsolete industrial premises in an environment of mixed quality. The site would benefit from redevelopment to realise its full development potential.

Issue 38: Sutton Road Commercial/Industrial Area	
Issue	Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how should planning policy be developed to realise the full development potential of the Sutton Road commercial/industrial area? 	<p>38A: develop policy to retain the area principally in its current format in accordance with Borough Local Plan provisions.</p> <p>38B: regenerate and improve the environment of the area to retain existing uses.</p> <p>38C: regenerate and improve the environment of the area to retain existing uses but redevelop part of site for housing.</p> <p>38D: other potential. Please specify.</p>

Roots Hall Football Ground, Victoria Avenue

4.140 The Football Club are currently seeking to relocate to new stadium facilities at Fossetts Farm to the north east of the town and to redevelop their current ground at Roots Hall for alternative uses. The current Borough Local Plan does not support the use of the site for retail purposes.

Issue 39: Roots Hall Football Ground, Victoria Avenue	
Issue	Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ how should planning policy be developed to consider alternative uses for the Roots Hall football ground should the Football Club relocate to another site? 	<p>39A: retain the site in leisure/recreation use 39B: develop for housing purposes 39C: develop for mixed use development 39D: other options. Please specify.</p>

Implementation and Monitoring

4.141 The success of the Town Centre Area Action Plan will be measured in terms of its deliverability. Policies developed must therefore be Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Realistic and Time based (SMART). They must provide developers and investors with clear guidance for key areas of opportunity and growth that set and prioritise development.

4.142 Many of the plan's policies and proposals will be implemented through the development control process of considering planning applications and seeking developer contributions towards the provision of infrastructure related to the development proposed.

4.143 However, delivering the Plan's policies will be the main task of 'Renaissance Southend' the Urban Regeneration Company. The Company will achieve this through the preparation and delivery of their detailed town centre Masterplan working in partnership with key stakeholders. It will be crucial therefore that this Area Action Plan and the Masterplan are co-ordinated as the Area Action Plan will put in place the planning policies needed to deliver the Masterplan.

4.144 In promoting development sites it will be essential to prepare them in readiness for development, to assemble 'clean sites', to encourage potential developers and investors to commit to Southend. In some cases this may require the local planning authority to enact Compulsory Purchase Powers to assemble land in the interests of good planning. This is set out in strategic policy KP3 in the Core Strategy DPD but it will be for this Area Action Plan to give detailed effect as to which sites and in which circumstances such provisions will be enacted.

4.145 In order to gauge the success of the plan it will be necessary to monitor its policy provisions. The Core Strategy DPD provides a strategic monitoring framework

setting out core indicators and targets. The monitoring and implementation framework for the town centre and retail development (Policy CP2) provides indicators for: **the percentage of completed retail, office and leisure development respectively in the town centre (floorspace) and amount of completed** retail, office and leisure development respectively in existing centres (floorspace).

Issue 40: Implementation and Monitoring	
Issue	Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ should the Area Action Plan contain more detailed indicators to effectively measure the performance of the plan? 	<p>40A: rely on performance indicators as set out in the Core Strategy.</p> <p>40B: develop more specific indicators to gauge the impact of policy provisions in the town centre. Please specify.</p>

Additional Issues

4.146 In considering the future development of the town centre to 2021, are there other issues not included in the above which you consider should be included in the Town Centre Area Action Plan?

Issue 41: Additional Issues	
Issue	Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ are there other issues not included in the above which you consider should be included in the Town Centre Area Action Plan? Please define issue/s and related policy option/s. 	<p>Option 41A: Please define</p>