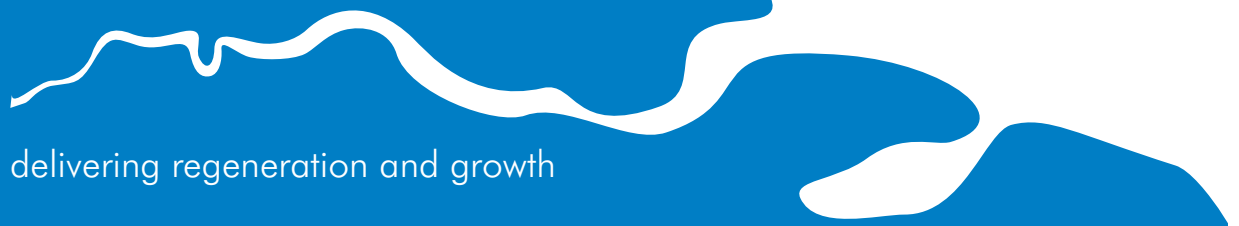


public participation: issues and options  
regulation 25  
june 2010

development plan document  
**central area action plan**

southend on sea borough council  
local development framework



delivering regeneration and growth

The UK economy entered a period of recession in 2008/2009 and experienced the biggest quarter-on-quarter economic decline since 1980. The economic recovery process has begun, but at a slow rate and the economy remains fragile. Coupled with a weak economy, the Government has to tackle a Government spending deficit that has exceeded an unprecedented £156 billion. The Treasury will also undertake a Spending Review, reporting in the autumn following consultation with all tiers of Government and the private sector. This current fragile economic situation is having a direct impact upon public and private investment decisions, which in turn is likely to affect the delivery of new houses, employment opportunities and infrastructure schemes, in the borough.

The Borough Council, however, is committed to providing a flexible and effective Planning Framework to guide development decisions in a way that best meets the needs and aspiration of local people and the business community. This means planning for the longer term now to provide certainty for the development industry ready for when the economy recovers.

The situation will be monitored closely and taken into account, along with comments made on this Issues and Options Report, during the next stage of Plan preparation.

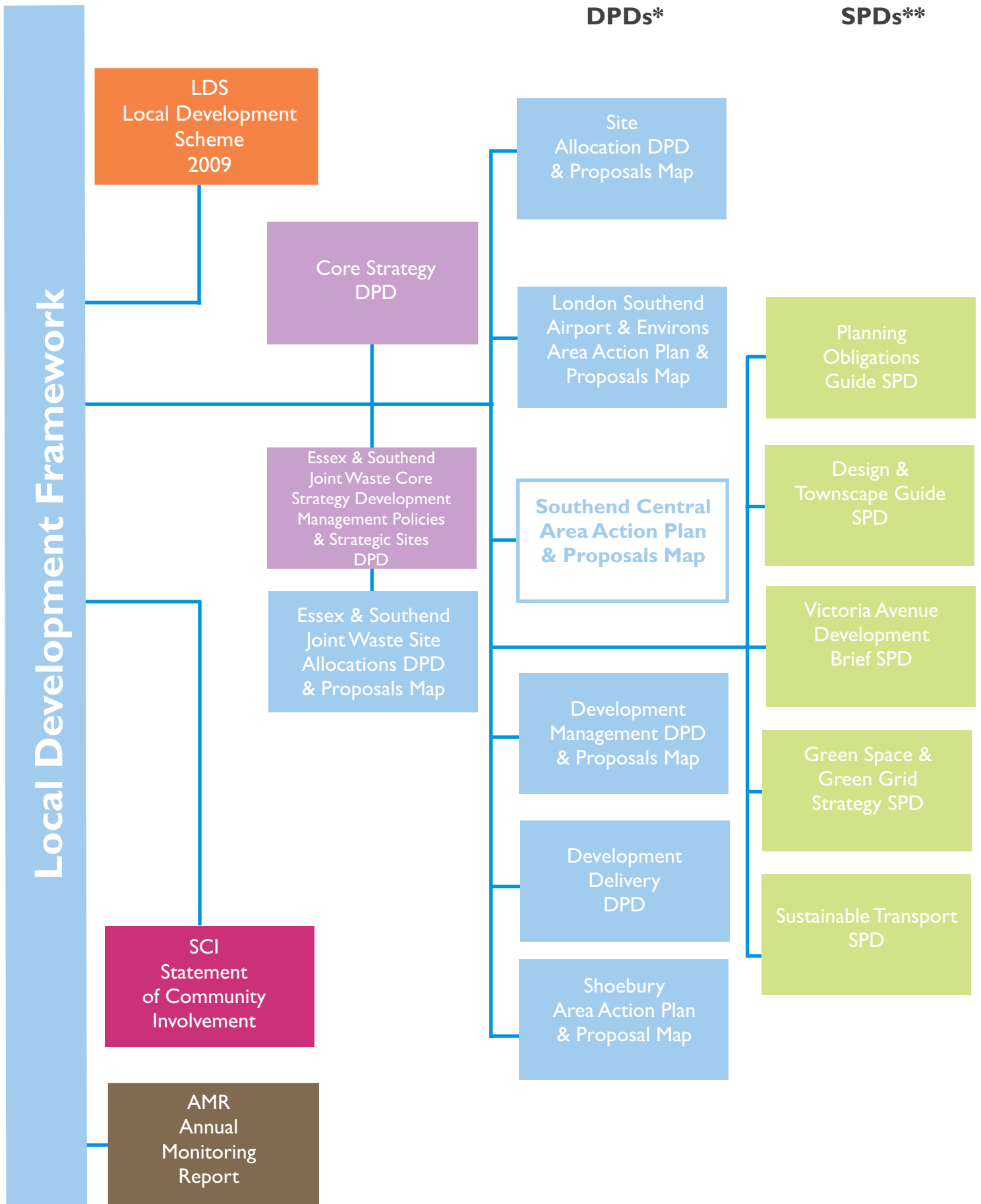
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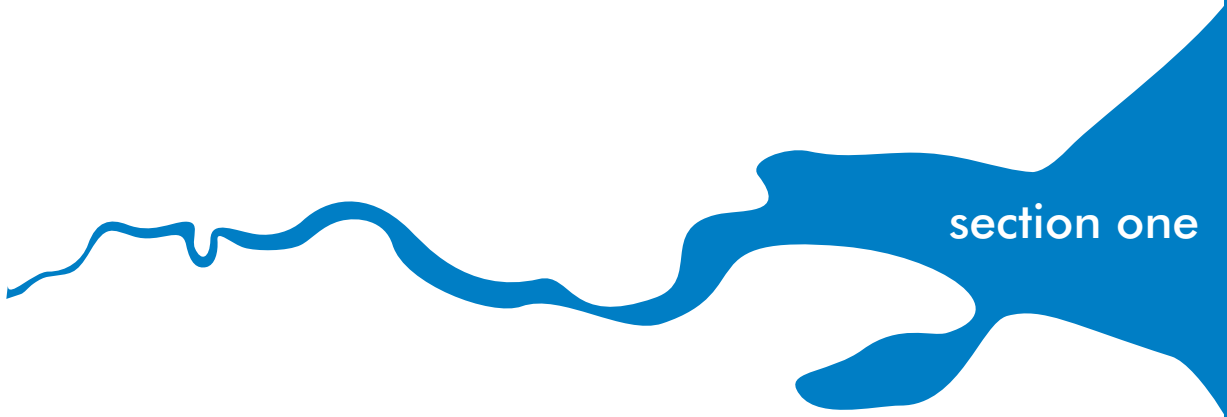
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Figure I: Southend on Sea Local Development Framework - Content



\*Development Plan Document

\*\* Supplementary Planning Document



section one

# 1. Introduction

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## Background to this document

- 1.1 In accordance with Southend Borough Council's adopted Local Development Scheme and the Strategic Objectives and the policies within its Core Strategy Development Plan Document [DPD], the Borough Council is preparing an Area Action Plan [AAP] for the central area of the town (to be known as Southend Central AAP) and associated Proposals Map.
- 1.2 This Issues and Options Document is a statutory stage in the preparation of the Southend Central AAP and has been prepared for consultation with stakeholders. It is a spatial plan that will eventually form part of the statutory Local Development Framework for the Borough.
- 1.3 It builds on the foundations laid by the Pre-Submission Consultation Issues and Options Report published in January 2007. Since this date the Regulations governing the preparation of development plans has changed. In addition, following a lengthy consultation process, the Central Area Masterplan [CAM], prepared by Renaissance Southend Limited (RSL), has also been prepared.
- 1.4 The Central Area Masterplan was commissioned by RSL in June 2006, and its development progressed through the following stages:
  - Stage 1: Baseline Report:  
Project appreciation, baseline research and analysis and identification of strengths, weaknesses and opportunities.
  - Stage 2: Options Identification Report:  
Identification and evaluation of physical development options.
  - Stage 3: Draft Final Report:  
Identification of preferred options
  - Stage 4: Final Report:  
Publication of Central Area Masterplan
- 1.5 In November 2007 the Council endorsed the principles of the Central Area Masterplan draft Development Framework. A year later in November 2008 the Council agreed to adopt the Central Area Masterplan prepared by RSL as a design brief and interim guidance.
- 1.6 This consultation plan is derived from, and takes forward, the guiding principles from the Central Area Masterplan.

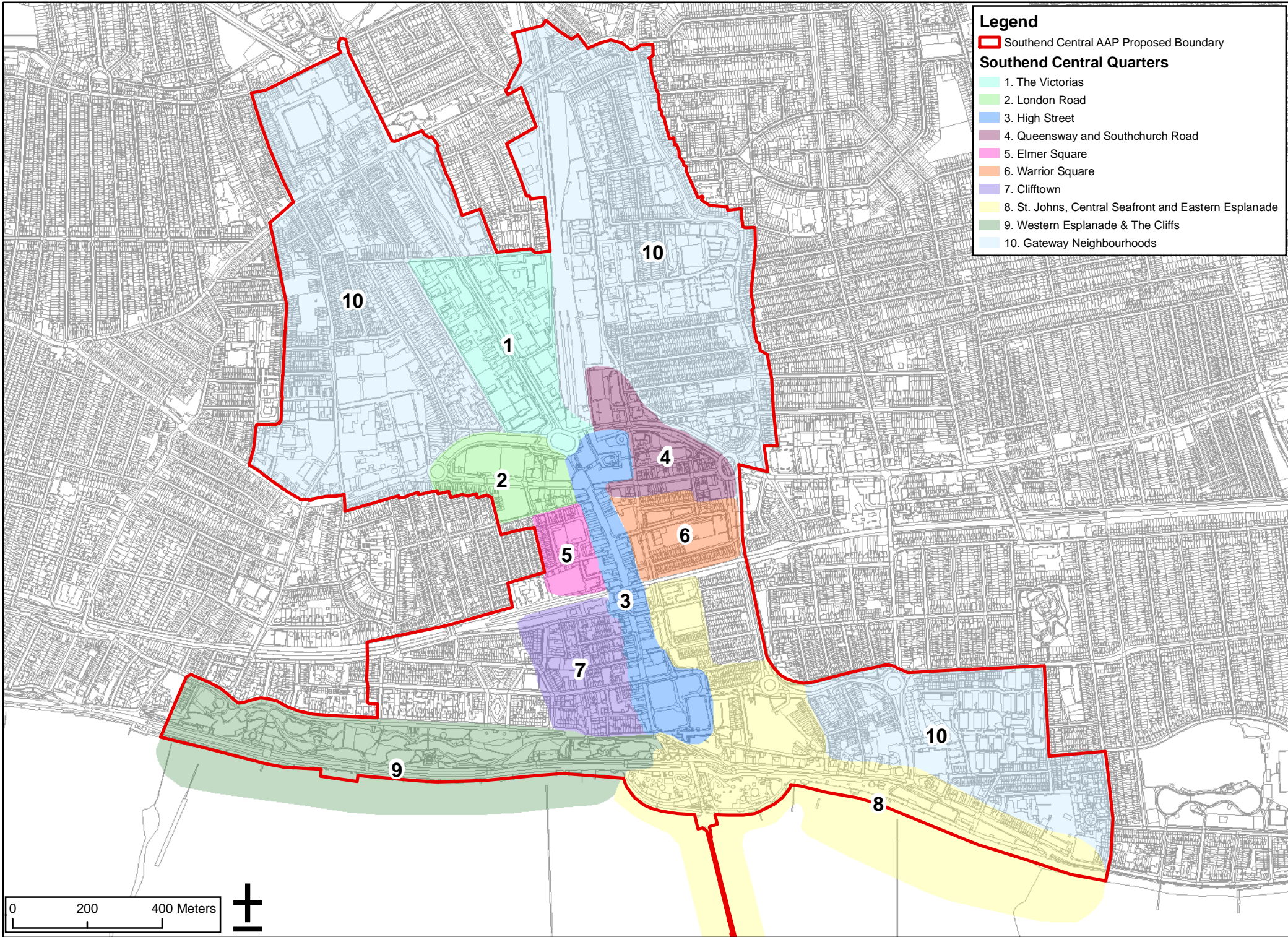
## The Area Action Plan Boundary

- 1.7 The Pre-Submission Consultation Issues and Options Report published in January 2007 sought views on four alternative options for a boundary for the Plan. As a result of the responses received, subsequent development pressures and other changes, a new boundary is proposed which is shown on the plan below.



**Legend**

- Southend Central AAP Proposed Boundary
- Southend Central Quarters**
  - 1. The Victorias
  - 2. London Road
  - 3. High Street
  - 4. Queensway and Southchurch Road
  - 5. Elmer Square
  - 6. Warrior Square
  - 7. Clifftown
  - 8. St. Johns, Central Seafront and Eastern Esplanade
  - 9. Western Esplanade & The Cliffs
  - 10. Gateway Neighbourhoods



## The Consultation Process

1.8 The stages in the timetable for production of this Area Action Plan for the central area are as follows:

Pre-Submission consultation	January 2007
<a href="#">Issues and Options consultation [regulation 25]</a>	<a href="#">June/July 2010</a>
Publication/Consultation [regulation 27]	December 2010/January 2011
Submission to the Secretary of State [regulation 30]	June 2011
Target date for Examination	October 2011
Proposed date for Adoption	February 2012

1.9 This plan represents the issues and options stage in plan preparation under the new regulations. It is a targeted consultation with key stakeholders. However, the Plan is also available to download from the Borough Council website and all public libraries within the Borough. It is also available in alternative formats (see inset page).

1.10 After the consultation period has ended, the Council will assess all comments received before preparing the submission version which will then be subject to wider public consultation.

1.11 The Council will also take into account the findings of studies, surveys and research carried out on its behalf, or on the behalf of Renaissance Southend Limited, as well as any additional evidence provided by other stakeholders. In particular the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment [SHLAA] including the 'call for site's undertaken as part of this study, Employment Land Review [ELR] and Retail Study will inform the submission version of this Plan.

## What is an Area Action Plan?

1.12 An Area Action Plan is a development plan document that forms part of the Local Development Framework for the Borough. Such Plans are used when there is a need to provide the planning framework for areas where significant change or conservation is needed. Area Action Plans should:

- deliver planned growth areas;
- stimulate regeneration;
- protect areas particularly sensitive to change;
- resolve conflicting objectives in areas subject to development pressures;
- or
- focus the delivery of area based regeneration initiatives.

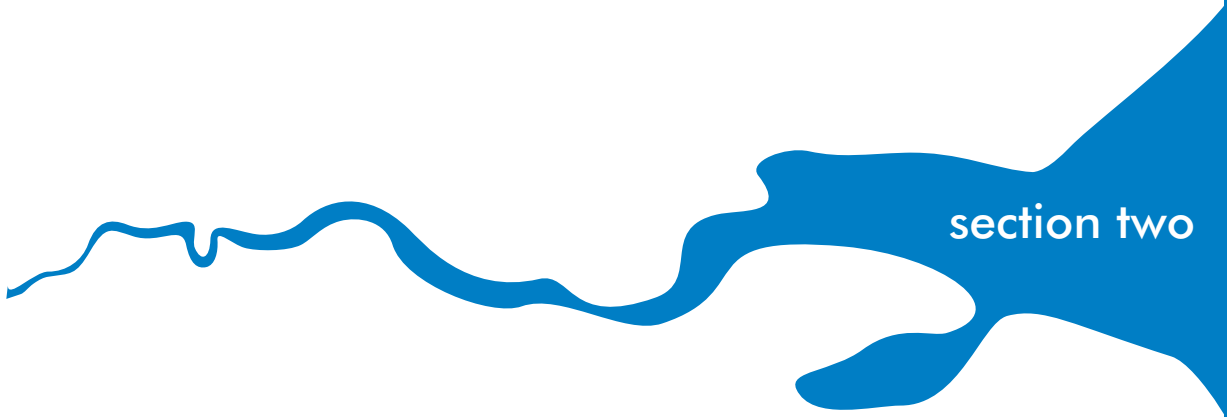
- 1.13 Area Action Plans can assist in producing a consensus as to the right strategy for an area and how it might be implemented. They can act as a focus and a catalyst for getting several key agencies and landowners to work together.

## **Why is an Area Action Plan required for Central Southend?**

- 1.14 The Core Strategy DPD spatial strategy makes provision for a large share of the Borough's new growth and regeneration to be focussed in the central area of the borough. The purpose of this Plan, therefore, is to give more detailed consideration to how and where employment-led regeneration and growth can sustainably be accommodated in the town centre, central seafront area and surrounding neighbourhoods. At the submission stage the Plan will contain detailed policies and site specific proposals aimed at strengthening and transforming Southend Town Centre's sub-regional role as a successful retail and commercial destination, cultural hub and education centre of excellence, leisure and tourist attraction, and place to live. The intention is to also seek to safeguard, conserve and enhance the significant biodiversity, green space and other environmental resources in the area and on the foreshore.
- 1.15 The UK economy entered a period of recession in 2008/2009 and experienced the biggest quarter-on-quarter economic decline since 1980. The economic recovery process has begun, but at a slow rate and the economy remains fragile. Coupled with a weak economy, the Government has to tackle a Government spending deficit that has exceeded an unprecedented £156 billion. The Treasury will also undertake a Spending Review, reporting in the autumn following consultation with all tiers of Government and the private sector. This current fragile economic situation is having a direct impact upon public and private investment decisions, which in turn is likely to affect the delivery of new houses, employment opportunities and infrastructure schemes, in the borough.

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The situation will be monitored closely and taken into account, along with comments made on this Issues and Options Report, during the next stage of Plan preparation.



section two

## 2. Context

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### Key Regeneration and Planning Policies for Southend

- 2.1 Strategic policy for Southend and the town centre is set out in the Regional Economic Strategy and the Regional Spatial Strategy.
- 2.2 *Inventing our Future: Collective Action for a Sustainable Economy* is the title of the Regional and Economic Strategy for the East of England 2008–2031 [RES]. This analysed the town’s assets and opportunities as follows:
- Southend-on-Sea is the largest urban area in the region and an important service and growing cultural centre. Major opportunities exist to strengthen Southend as a centre for knowledge-based employment, building on the creation of the university campus and leading companies such as Olympus Keymed and RBS
  - Southend-on-Sea receives approximately six million visitors per annum, and is home to London Southend Airport, which has potential for passenger growth and enhancement of its engineering and maintenance activities.
- 2.3 The RES sets out the following ambition for the area which is still regarded as relevant to:
- reinvent and revitalise the town centre in Southend-on-Sea
  - become a niche centre in the creative industries, including a focused offer in Southend-on-Sea built around the University, METAL and thriving arts and new media businesses
- 2.4 Currently the strategic planning context for the Borough Council’s Core Strategy Development Plan Document, as well as this Area Action Plan for the Central Area, is set out in the **East of England Plan (Regional Spatial Strategy [RSS])**. Whilst reform of this strategic tier of the planning system is currently underway many aspects of the RSS are still considered relevant
- 2.5 RSS policy SS3 designates Southend as one of a number of **key centres for development and change**. Policy is to concentrate new development in such locations in order to make the most of existing infrastructure and the potential for improvements or extensions to it. Southend is also listed as a town of strategic importance for retail and other town centre purposes where RSS policy E5 designates Southend as a Regional Centre and seeks to locate major new retail development and complementary town centre uses in a manner that would be consistent in scale and character with the centre and its role in the regional structure. In addition the town is also a Regional Transport Node where the objective of RSS policy T5 is to enable more inter-urban movements by public transport and to provide links between modes and with local services.

- 2.6 In order to give effect to the strategic aims set out in the above policies RSS policy ETG4 requires Local Development Documents for Southend to:
- Facilitate physical, economic and social regeneration of the urban area including maximising the re-use of previously developed land;
  - Achieve an urban renaissance of the town centre by establishing it as a focus for cultural and intellectual activities led by the development of a university campus, securing a full range of high quality sub-regional services and facilities, and providing for mixed use development to secure new jobs and homes;
  - Upgrade strategic and local passenger transport accessibility, including the development of strategic transport interchanges around existing transport nodes.
- 2.7 One of the key outcomes sought in Southend Together’s Community Plan, **Sustainable Community Strategy 2007 – 2017: Building our Future**, is the creation of a competitive regional town centre that would contribute to the creation of a thriving and sustainable local economy, which extends opportunity for local residents and promotes prosperity throughout the borough. In addition this strategy seeks to improve accessibility in the borough, particularly to the town centre and to also establish a coherent car parking and payment strategy.
- 2.8 To meet the ambitions and priorities identified by the Community Plan the Council has adopted a set of strategic objectives. These provide a firm basis for the **Core Strategy** and the policies and proposals that it contains. The Core Strategy is part of the adopted development plan and is one of the key means of implementing these ambitions and priorities. Core Strategy strategic objective SO8 is to secure a thriving, vibrant and attractive town centre.
- 2.9 The Core Strategy is a spatial strategy that seeks to deliver a distribution of investment and development based on the following approach:
- A town centre renewal package with an emphasis on refocusing of retail opportunities, a major expansion of town centre housing, expansion of education/lifelong learning, culture and leisure provision, including the strengthening of Southend’s position as a ‘University Town’ and renaissance of the seafront, and better integration with public transport interchanges.
  - Reducing and preventing flood risk through the management of development and through providing for appropriate and sustainable flood risk management measures as part of a comprehensive shoreline management strategy. In those areas that are identified as being at risk, development will only be permitted where it is appropriate to its location in terms of its type, siting and sustainable mitigation measures proposed.
- 2.10 Core Strategy policy KP1 sets out the Council’s Spatial Strategy. As a principal basis for sustainable development in the town, development and investment will be expected to build on and contribute to the effectiveness and integration of the key transport corridors and interchanges. The primary focus of regeneration and

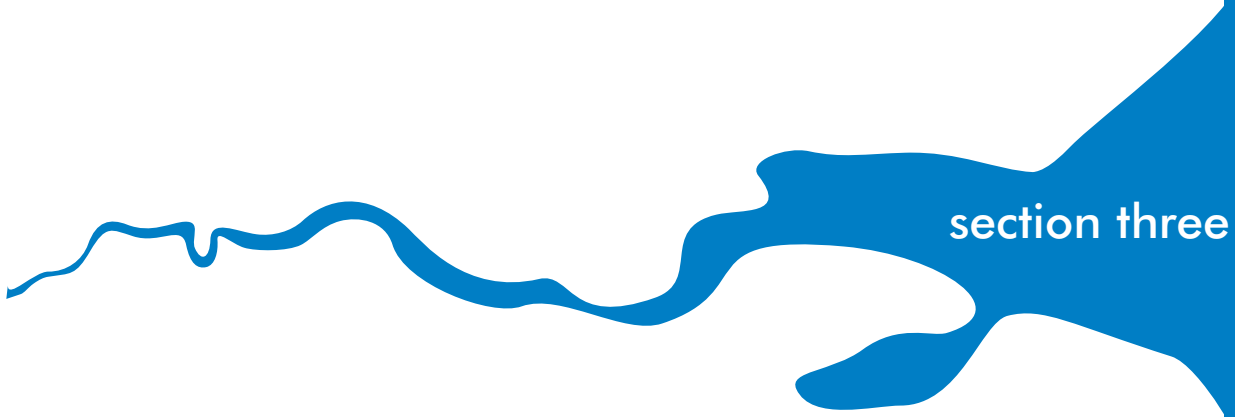
growth within Southend will be in the town centre and the central area (including the central seafront area). The spatial strategy is to regenerate and transform the existing town centre, as a fully competitive sub-regional centre, led by the development of the University Campus, and securing a full range of quality sub-regional services to provide for 6500 new jobs and providing for at least 2000 additional homes in conjunction with the upgrading of the strategic and local passenger transport accessibility, including the development of Southend Central and Victoria Stations as strategic transport interchanges and related travel centres. In addition, appropriate regeneration and growth will be focussed on the Seafront to enhance its role as a successful leisure and tourist attraction and place to live, and make the best use of the River Thames, subject to safeguarding the biodiversity importance of the foreshore.

- 2.11 Southend Town Centre will remain the first preference for all forms of retail development and for other town centre uses attracting large numbers of people, as set out in relevant national planning policy, the East of England Plan and local strategies and plans. Core Strategy Policy CP2 promotes the development of the Town Centre:
- As a regional centre providing the full range of high quality sub-regional services and facilities required to meet the needs of south east Essex Thames Gateway for higher order retail, leisure, cultural and higher education services, for office-based employment, and for higher quality mixed use development to secure new jobs and homes;
  - As the key focus and driver for the regeneration of Southend, and
  - As a priority location for urban renaissance.
- 2.12 In order to meet the forecast quantitative shopping needs and currently identified qualitative deficiencies, Policy CP2 also makes provision for additional comparison and convenience goods floorspace to be located in accordance with the sequential preference:
1. Within Southend Town Centre;
  2. On the edge of Southend Town Centre, where the development will contribute to and not prejudice achievement of the regeneration and urban renaissance objectives for the Town Centre.
- 2.13 Core Strategy Policy CP3 seeks improvements to transport infrastructure and services by widening travel choice and providing for the development of high quality transport interchanges at Southend Victoria Railway Station, Southend Central Railway Station, and Southend Travel Centre.
- 2.14 Good quality urban design is a vital component and a key catalyst in regeneration and urban renaissance. Core Strategy Policy CP4 specifies the measures and considerations that would lead to the creation of a high quality, sustainable urban environment which enhances and complements the natural and built assets of Southend.

## Sustainable Development and Design

- 2.15 National planning policy is set out in PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development. Good design ensures attractive, usable, durable and adaptable places and is a key element in achieving sustainable development. Government policy requires local authorities to promote energy efficient buildings; community heating schemes, the use of combined heat and power, small scale renewable and low carbon energy schemes in developments; the sustainable use of water resources; and the use of sustainable drainage systems in the management of run-off.
- 2.16 The aims of the Council in delivering true sustainability are broader than ecology and the reduction of energy consumption. Sustainable development should provide a better quality of life for everyone, now and in the future.





section three

### 3. The Key Challenges to be Addressed

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3.1 Southend performs a variety of functions and is defined by its diverse urban character. The Central Area Masterplan published in March 2008 explains that a good way of identifying opportunities and constraints is to conceptualise the way people understand the place as a series of different experiences – ranging from participation in core functions and activities such as the High Street retail experience, to the finer grain elements such as the built heritage. The following key challenges for the Central Area have been identified from the findings that emerged in the baseline research for the Central Area Masterplan and the stakeholder and other consultation events that were held.

#### Southend as a Place:

- 3.2 **Urban Design** - analysis of land use patterns show that the Central Area has a strong zonal geography with offices and civic uses to the north, retail use focused on the High Street and leisure uses on the seafront. A finer grain mix of uses is developing to the west of the High Street in relation to educational, cultural and food, drink and retail units. There is a definite opportunity to encourage a greater mix of uses across the centre to enhance accessibility between the different 'zones' and to increase the physical breadth of the town centre, particularly in relation to the creation of a new retail circuit to the south-east of the High Street.
- 3.3 In relation to the structure and form of the Central Area, there is an opportunity to promote a more permeable street layout between Victoria Avenue and London Road, and to define a more distinctive urban grain to the east of the High Street focusing on opportunities at Warrior Square, Tylers Avenue and Seaway car park.
- 3.4 There is an opportunity to develop taller buildings in key areas in order to create landmarks and enhance Southend's architectural quality, as well as to take advantage of the excellent waterfront and estuary views. It is important that tall buildings do not compromise the special character of the historic environment including the Conservation Areas.
- 3.5 **Public realm** – there are opportunities to shape the experience of the Central Area. Public realm [natural and man-made], open space, landscape and seascape play a major role and the challenge is to use these assets to knit the town together.
- 3.6 **Southend as a retail centre:** There are clear opportunities to improve the performance of Southend as a major retail centre.
- 3.7 The focus for retail activity should continue to be the established town centre; however there is an opportunity to achieve critical mass by delivering a strong retail circuit and new units to the east of the High Street focusing on the Tylers Avenue site. This would add a fresh major component to the retail offer. In order to reinforce the primacy of the High Street it is important that The Victoria and The

Royals continue to improve as anchors. The refurbishment of The Victoria is now complete but there are a significant number of vacant units.

- 3.8 The Clifftown area and other secondary retail locations have a significant potential to play a part in the provision of a wider breadth of retailing uses in the central area.
- 3.9 The vitality of the retail experience is essential and as such the option that is chosen for the submission version of this plan should also incorporate significant and linked public realm improvements, a greater mix of complementary uses and a user-friendly atmosphere. This will help to differentiate the town centre from other centres in the region and create a unique, bespoke and, in places, speciality offer which would enhance the appeal of the town centre to the catchment population, as well as to visitors from further afield.
- 3.10 The need for additional bulky food outlets is acknowledged because of the expanded role for the central area and the accompanying planned increases in new homes and jobs. Such outlets have a key role as part of a wider expanded retailing offer in the central part of Southend though contrary views are acknowledged.
- 3.11 **Southend as a place to work:** the challenge is to improve Southend's performance as an employment centre. Opportunities to achieve this are underpinned by the overarching objective to maximise sustainability, inclusivity and town centre viability by providing a mix of employment generating uses in the central area.
- 3.12 Whilst retail and servicing will have a strong role to play, office employment should also be promoted as it supports a large number of workers from the borough and south Essex who also bring additional spending power to the centre.
- 3.13 The office stock on the western side of Victoria Avenue has a negative impact on the market. Renaissance Southend Limited in conjunction with the Council is preparing a Supplementary Planning Document for this area that promotes the redevelopment and refurbishment of office blocks to take on a new role with a mix of uses including workspace, residential and civic uses.
- 3.14 The central area also has the potential for an agglomeration of higher and further education related uses including residential accommodation, ancillary entertainment facilities, and alternative workspace uses in this area. Allied to this there is scope here and elsewhere to replace/relocate some of the reservoir of office space in an alternative, more accessible location in the town centre.
- 3.15 There is an opportunity to promote the connection between the expanding educational sector and cultural industries. Part of the challenge is to encourage the provision of Small and Medium Enterprise space, workshops, research and development and other forms of innovative employment generating uses as well as Grade 'A' modern attractive office floorspace.

- 3.16 **Southend as a place to live:** the provision of the targeted numbers of new residential accommodation will contribute to the enhancement of the vitality of the central area. The challenge is to make provision for and deliver a mix of unit types and sizes in order to create mixed and balanced communities. In addition to affordable and family units, the central area should also accommodate significant student dwellings.
- 3.17 In order to create a balanced central area community the challenge is to also provide the community and social infrastructure required to support residents, students and workers who are located in, and use, the central area.
- 3.18 **Southend as a visitor centre:** the town has an established visitor economy. However the challenge is to develop new markets for visitors. The regeneration of the core town centre, particularly the retail sector and improvements and enhancements to the urban environment would assist in generating different types of visitor. The objective is to achieve a balance between big-name High Street retailing and finer grain specialist outlets and specialist shops alongside a vibrant food and drink economy in areas such as Clifftown.
- 3.19 There is scope to make links with the University of Essex and South Essex College initiatives, and to take advantage of attractive settings such as Cliff Gardens which would be appropriate for cultural activity. It is recognised that larger scale leisure is likely to be market-led and would be a longer term aspiration for this Plan rather than a pre-requisite for realising this vision.
- 3.20 The Council's ambition for the Pier, which is a grade 2 listed structure, is to see it developed along cultural and maritime themes for the benefit of visitors and residents.
- 3.21 **Southend as an educational centre:** the educational sector will play a major role in realising the potential of Southend in a sub-regional context. Both the University of Essex and South Essex College have a strong presence in the town centre and there is a strong case to support the development of a cultural and educational hub in the Elmer Square area, adding to the critical mass of uses north of the railway station.
- 3.22 An important consideration is the long term success and sustainability of the University and College. In order to support the long term growth of the education sector, provision should be made for additional teaching facilities, space for graduate enterprises, ancillary student facilities, for example a students union and student/key worker accommodation.
- 3.23 There is an opportunity to make provision for one or two core educational locations, and a dispersal of ancillary and associated functions across the central area. As part of the implementation of the Area Action Plan it will be important to ensure that education provision meets the needs of the community.

- 3.24 **Southend as a cultural hub:** Southend has a major opportunity to realise the town's role as a cultural hub. The potential success of the cultural hub is likely to relate to a spectrum of interventions ranging from formal to informal, and public to private projects. These should include:
- Institutional projects [e.g. educational provision on the Elmer Square site];
  - Public cultural provision [e.g. a new library and a new cultural centre];
  - Private cultural provision such as theatres and music venues, and
  - A general step change in the urban experience incorporating a vibrant mix of town centre activities.
- 3.25 The cultural status of Southend will be a key area of growth in the context of the town's role at the heart of the Thames Gateway South Essex sub-region. There is scope for a digital exploration centre in the town centre, possibly as part of the overall mix of uses on St John's.
- 3.26 **Southend as a hub for the natural and built heritage:** Southend is defined by an attractive natural and built heritage and there are a number of opportunities and constraints relating to this theme.
- 3.27 Public space is vital to the experience of the central area for residents, visitors and workers. However, the quality of its provision is variable and there is an absence of a strategic plan to direct the linking of spaces into a coherent network that enhances urban life. There is also a substantial under-provision of green space and poor coordination with the Local Biodiversity Action Plan. The challenge is to develop a comprehensive vision for this work that both supports the enhancement of urban spaces including the High Street and the seafront, and develops their value as contributors to the quality of the Central Area as a whole based on the town's Green Grid approach.
- 3.28 This Plan will seek to preserve and celebrate heritage. Our Conservation Areas and historic buildings are reference points for many within the community and help build up a 'mental map' of what is special about our town. Through a combination of strategies, policies and actions, the Borough Council and its partners will build upon this reserve of heritage and identity to help bring about the renaissance of Southend-on-Sea. In relation to tall buildings, there is scope to make provision for this type of development in appropriate central locations to create new iconic buildings and spaces.
- 3.29 The natural and built heritage of Southend is a major asset in the context of developing a cultural and educational hub. Southend is also set aside from other resort towns with a fantastic seaside setting with memorable views over the Thames Estuary. In addition, the foreshore is a special natural environment which is reflected in the nature conservation designations for the area. As far as possible, this Plan will seek to minimise the impact on the foreshore. However, there is scope to make better economic use of the Estuary, possibly through the provision of further moorings. The creation of new habitats might be an appropriate technique for mitigating against any impacts associated with development in the seafront

area. It is imperative that the Plan achieves a proper balance between the economic imperatives of the core vision to diversify the attraction of Southend whilst also balancing this against responsibilities for the conservation of internationally important habitats.

- 3.30 **Southend as a civic hub:** the town centre will continue to play a role as a civic hub. There is an opportunity to consolidate and improve civic functions on the eastern side of Victoria Avenue and to also create space for introducing additional development. There is scope for refurbishment of the existing building stock, but the location of civic uses seems appropriate in terms of the scale and boulevard character of Victoria Avenue. It is considered that the transformation of the western side of Victoria Avenue alongside landscape enhancements will provide a high quality setting for civic functions.
- 3.31 **Southend as a transport interchange:** the central area of Southend is a major transport interchange and the quality and sustainability of connections is the cornerstone of this Plan.
- 3.32 Vehicular movement will be enhanced through a package of improvements including rationalisation of the one-way system, facilitation of a modal shift towards more sustainable public transport modes and relocation of parking through a comprehensive parking strategy.
- 3.33 Pedestrian connections will be enhanced through upgrades in the public realm, improved activity along key walking routes (particularly movement to and from the High Street via Chichester Road), and projects to improve key junctions and barriers to movement. There is a specific focus on better movement across Victoria Square junction and routes across Queensway and to the seafront.
- 3.34 The car parking approach is to provide parking at key locations at the edge of the core town centre and along public transport corridors. This will enable sustainable movement patterns and will also allow the selective redevelopment and reprovision of surface car parking sites which do not represent the best use of scarce central land. Tylers Avenue, Warrior Square and Seaway car parks have a key role in the reinvigoration of Chichester Road and the central area as a whole.
- 3.35 In terms of public transport, this Plan should seek to maintain the existing approach as far as possible. The Plan recognises that some limited access to the High Street should be retained or improved as an option to overcome issues of safety and vitality associated with the evening and night time economy. In addition some re-working of the transport routes on Chichester Road to accommodate the redevelopment of adjacent sites would be required. The Plan also makes provision for the South Essex Rapid Transit (SERT) in linking into the sub-regional movement network. It is acknowledged that public funding for major infrastructure projects in the short to medium term is unlikely due to the current economic situation. Nevertheless the Southend Central Area Action Plan is seeking to affect change and influence investment and development decisions over a 15-20 year period. It is

important, therefore, that all key infrastructure requirements for the area are considered as part of the plan preparation process.

- 3.36 There is also scope for the rebranding of public transport with a view to transforming the perception of buses. The franchise for C2C, which has the potential to become an 'urban metro' service, is up for renewal in 2011. The outcome of the current DfT consultation will be incorporated into the submission version of this Plan.

### Option Box 1

**Have we correctly identified the key challenges to be addressed by the Area Action Plan? If not what have we missed?**

## Summary of opportunities and constraints

- **Victoria Avenue:** Existing stock to the west is a constraint on the office market. Opportunity to provide alternative and mix of uses and refurbishment. Boulevard treatment and landscaping opportunities to fulfil gateway potential.
- **Queensway:** major barrier to movement. Opportunity to revitalise this route with landscaping and greenery. Possibility of improved crossings at key junctions.
- **Station enhancements:** Southend Victoria and Southend Central underperform as gateways to the town and current and planned improvements will be important.
- **Cultural and educational hub:** major opportunity to facilitate growth in these linked sectors building on the strength of SEC and UoE developments. Elmer Square (the site of Farringdon car park) has a pivotal role to play.
- **Clifftown Quarter:** this area has momentum as a focus for independent retailing, restaurants, bars, offices and workshops. There are a number of infill opportunities.
- **Opportunities for improved pedestrian links:** opportunities for better links at Victoria Circus and from Seaway to the seafront.
- **Retail anchors:** the performance of Southend as a retail destination is constrained by its anchors – The Royals and The Victoria Centre which both present significant opportunities for further improvement.
- **Conservation Areas:** the Conservation Areas have a strong role in defining the unique and attractive character of Southend.

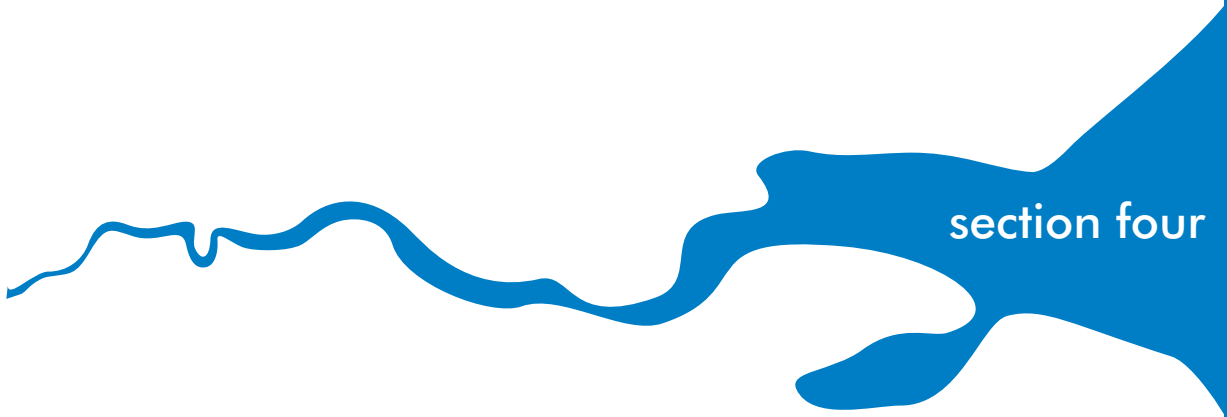
- **Central Seafront:** opportunities for improving the leisure and tourism offer building on the enhancements to the public realm currently underway:
- **Future opportunities:** a number of sites could come forward for refurbishment, expansion or development. Some of these are subject to existing consents and others are more aspirational.
- **The High Street:** the length of the High Street constrains the retail performance of Southend. There are opportunities to enhance the quality and performance of the High Street.
- **Widening the town centre:** there is scope for the area to the east of Chichester Road to take on a new urban character. The surface car park sites (Warrior Square, Tylers Avenue and Seaway) have significant development potential in this respect. There is an opportunity to provide enhanced connectivity between the town centre and seafront via the Tylers Avenue and Seaway sites. Clearly there is a need for a comprehensive parking and movement strategy given the importance of these sites for parking, and Chichester Road as a servicing/public transport corridor.
- **Severance caused by the railway:** the LTS line causes major severance, restricting north-south movement.
- **Western Esplanade:** the Esplanade is a busy traffic route with generous parking provision which hinders free pedestrian movement. There are opportunities to reduce the impact of the road and parking as a barrier.
- **The Cliffs:** the formal character and tranquillity of the gardens is an asset but the gardens are constrained by landslips. Opportunities exist to rectify the slips, enhance the landscape and introduce appropriate new uses.
- **Marine Parade/ Eastern Esplanade:** the eastern side of the seafront has potential for landscape improvements and more active uses, drawing on the 'city beach' concept. This area has a different character to the Western Esplanade.
- **Pier:** the Pier is a major landmark for Southend – there is a major opportunity to reinvent the pier as a destination.
- **Foreshore designations:** nature conservation designations (SSI, RAMSAR, and SPA) restrict development on the foreshore.
- **Gateway Neighbourhoods:** there are a number of areas adjacent to the core town centres which are facing particular challenges including economic decline, degraded urban fabric and dereliction. These 'transitional' or 'Gateway' areas, whilst requiring regeneration in their own right for the existing residential and business community, also provide an opportunity to play a key in meeting the housing and community objectives for the town centre



- **Connectivity:** opportunities exist to create better integration across the town centre, and between the town centre and both the seafront and neighbouring residential areas
- **Leisure and tourist accommodation:** there is potential to develop hotel and guest house provision as the town's economy and leisure and tourism offer develops

### Option Box 2

**Are there further opportunities which could be explored and developed through this Area Action Plan?**



section four

## 4. Vision for Southend Central Area

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- 4.1 Our **ambition** for Southend Central Area, including the Central Seafront, is for it to be a prosperous and thriving regional centre that is vibrant, safe and hospitable and rich in commerce, learning and culture. A place where people want to live, work and visit.
- 4.2 Our **aim** is to transform the image of Southend through sustainable economic growth, development and social provision, and for it to be independently recognised as a popular location for businesses, education, residents and visitors.
- 4.3 Our **objectives** are:
1. To improve and transform the economic vitality, viability and diversity of Southend Town Centre by encouraging the establishment of a wider range of homes, businesses and shops whilst providing new opportunities for recreation and leisure.;
  2. To improve the buildings and public realm, including accessible green space, within the Central Area, to manage traffic and improve cycling and walking facilities so that Southend becomes a place that is more pleasant to experience and move around in.;
  3. To always have full regard to the unique assets of Southend Town Centre and in particular its spectacular coastal setting, rich social and built heritage, its excellent rail links to London, and its airport;
  4. To always have regard to the significant biodiversity assets and environmental quality of the Central Area, help meet obligations on carbon emissions and adopt an approach to climate change through measures that mitigate against, or adapt to change;
  5. To promote design excellence in all things and to ensure that this quality standard is also expressed within the actions of our delivery partners;
  6. To expand the presence of the University of Essex and the South Essex College and establish Southend as an important regional centre for learning;
  7. To encourage the establishment and expansion of all businesses in Southend Town Centre by identifying, promoting or by actively bringing forward suitable sites for development to meet modern user and investor requirements;
  8. To increase the number and diversity of people living within the town centre and adjoining residential areas by bringing into use empty or underused

floorspace and by building more homes and making efforts to ensure that living in the Town Centre becomes appealing to more families with children.

### Option Box 3

**Do you consider that these Objectives for the Area Action Plan reflect the challenges and opportunities in the Central Area having regard to national and local priorities for the Borough?**

## Evaluation Criteria

4.4 The following table sets out the evaluation criteria which have been defined to test how the three overarching spatial options described in the next section deliver the vision and objectives defined above. The options and policy approaches set out in this document will be subject to the required Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment and assessments under the Habitats Directives. However for the purpose of evaluating the spatial options at this stage the criteria are derived largely from the Regeneration Framework stage 1B report published by Renaissance Southend Limited. The criteria and objectives are based on eight main themes:

1. Gateway criteria (basic overarching objectives which the option must fulfil);
2. Retail;
3. Employment and offices;
4. Residential;
5. Learning and culture;
6. Leisure;
7. Public realm and movement; and
8. Delivery.

Criteria and objectives	Criteria and objectives
<b>Gateway</b>	<b>Learning and Culture</b>
A more attractive place to live and work in and to visit	Develop quality food/drink/hospitality
Create clear spatial plan for the town centre	Develop HE Campus
Promote good design	Develop leisure
Promote sustainability	Develop culture
<b>Retail</b>	Exploit SSBC land ownership
Improve retail circuit	<b>Leisure</b>
Assemble sites to improve plan form	Develop the leisure offer
Respond to forecast demand in core	Exploit SSBC land ownership

markets	
Upgrade shopping precincts	<b>Public Realm and Movement</b>
Exploit SSBC land ownership	Improve access/connectivity
<b>Employment and Offices</b>	Develop railway stations as gateways
Respond to forecast demand in core markets	Improve links to/from seafront
Promote small office based workspace	Stabilise Cliffs
Exploit SSBC ownership	Exploit SSBC land ownership
<b>Residential</b>	<b>Delivery</b>
Respond to forecast demand in core markets	Assemble sites to improve plan form
Increase town centre population and income	
Respond to forecast demand in core markets	

#### Option Box 4

**Do you agree that the Evaluation Criteria set out above are the right ones to test the overarching Spatial Options?**

## 5. Spatial Options

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### Structure of Spatial Options

The three spatial development strategy options are:

Option 1: Strengthening the status quo;

Option 2: Reinforcing urban circuits; and

Option 3: City by the Sea.

5.1 Each option has the following structure:

- Rationale: A brief explanation of the relationship between the option and the vision statement;
- Evaluation of the option: A concise evaluation of the option in relation to the criteria set out above.

### The Options Explained

#### Option 1: Strengthen the Status Quo

##### Rationale

- 5.2 Option 1 seeks to deliver the vision by strengthening existing assets with a view to promoting a step change in prosperity of core market sectors and town centre vibrancy.
- 5.3 The High Street option seeks to put the heart back into Southend, focusing on the existing town centre core – the High Street.
- 5.4 In addition to supporting the primacy of the High Street, this option consolidates the spine by enhancing the status and quality of surrounding sites including Elmer, Clifftown and sites on Chichester Road.
- 5.5 Seaway Car Park and Victoria Avenue are also enhanced in this option.

## Evaluation of Option 1

### Gateway

- A more attractive place to live and work in and to visit
- Create clear spatial plan for town centre
- Promote good design
- Promote sustainability

Fails to correct the principal causes of underperformance (it maintains the zonal approach and provides no correction to the retail circuit). As a consequence it provides no deliverable basis for capturing prospective demand (it does not create the conditions that will attract market investment of the type, or on the scale, of the quality, or in the locations needed).

### Retail

- Improve retail circuit
- Assemble sites to improve plan form
- Respond to forecast demand in core markets
- Upgrade shopping precincts
- Exploit SSBC ownership

This option does not address the extensive linear structure of the High Street or the retail theming of this – i.e. creating a core prime pitch. The concept of a ‘parallel’ High Street along Chichester road with retail placed on the bus station site would not be an attractive proposition for many multiple retailers as it does not provide the critical mass or a strong enough destination to change the retail and pedestrian flows.

### Employment and Offices

- Respond to forecast demand in core markets
- Promote small office-based workspace
- Exploit SSBC land ownership

This option does not make sufficient allocation for office-based workspace and growth

### Residential

- Respond to forecast demand in core markets
- Increase town centre population
- Exploit SSBC land ownership

Residential use is identified as a component of the uses on Victoria Avenue, but there is a concern that the level and location of residential use would not deliver the town centre vitality expected of a sustainable community.

### Learning and Culture

- Develop quality food/drink
- Develop HE campus
- Develop leisure
- Develop culture
- Exploit SSBC land ownership

Option 1 supports the development of a quality food and drink offer focused in the High Street and Clifftown. However, there is a concern that there is an insufficient step change in the quality overall to achieve the desired shift. This option makes provision for a cultural hub at Farringdon and dispersed uses but there is a lack of critical mass of cultural and educational uses.

### Leisure

- Develop the leisure offer
- Exploit SSBC land ownership

Option 1 makes provision for leisure uses on Seaway. However the site is detached from the existing core town centre and seafront.

## Public Realm and Movement

- Improve access/connectivity
- Develop railway stations as gateways
- Improve link to/from Seafront
- Stabilise Cliffs
- Exploit SSBC land ownership

This option makes small scale interventions to the public realm (e.g. cliff slips) but there is a sense that it is insufficiently radical in relation to links at Victoria Circus and Pier Hill.

## Delivery

- Assemble sites to improve plan form

This option is unlikely to achieve the step change within the town centre and would fail to create the necessary impetus to provide the spin-off benefits required to achieve wider regeneration. There is an insufficient level of intervention to implement the vision for the Plan.



## Option 2: Enhance urban circuits

### Rationale

- 5.6 Option 2 is more radical than option 1, seeking to reinforce and create a series of urban circuits. It is defined by a more comprehensive approach to the High Street and adjacent areas of opportunity on Chichester Road and London Road.
- 5.7 This option continues to support the Specialist Quarter in Clifftown, and also defines a hub for the University and cultural uses in the Elmer Square Area.
- 5.8 Victoria Avenue retains a civic and cultural role but takes on a new character as mixed use Quarter with workspace, local retail and residential uses.
- 5.9 Seaway car park is developed as a node between the High Street/Chichester retail circuit and the Seafront.
- 5.10 This option is also more radical in addressing issues and options on the seafront.

## Evaluation of Option 2

### Gateway

- A more attractive place to live and work in and to visit
- Create clear spatial plan for town centre
- Promote good design
- Promote sustainability

The retail circuit cannot be created without a significant third retail anchor, and therefore land on a scale and so configured as to allow for it and the connections with the existing retail provision. Simply 'broadening' the High Street will not fulfil the objective and is probably not deliverable as conceived in any case. The zonal problems are maintained and it is neither desirable nor feasible to create an alternative mixed use Quarter at Victoria.

### Retail

- Improve retail circuit
- Assemble sites to improve plan form
- Respond to forecast demand in core markets
- Upgrade shopping precincts
- Exploit SSBC ownership

For the width of the High Street to increase and be attractive to retailers, it is crucial to place an anchor within either the bus station or the Seaways site and not have a detached retail/leisure hub on the Seaways car park which would provide an isolated commercial area.

### Employment and Offices

- Respond to forecast demand in core markets
- Promote small office-based workspace
- Exploit SSBC land ownership

Option 2 offers a better commercial option for the town by increasing the

width of the High Street which will add value to the central retail area and open up Chichester Road.

### Residential

- Respond to forecast demand in core markets
- Increase town centre population
- Exploit SSBC land ownership

This option is more comprehensive and does make provision for residential as part of a mix of uses – specifically in the broadened High Street area.

### Learning and Culture

- Develop quality food/drink
- Develop HE campus
- Develop leisure
- Develop culture
- Exploit SSBC land ownership

This option provides better scope for an enhancement in the quality of the food and drink offer. However, concerns exist about the viability of the retail circuit and the detachment of retail and leisure on Seaways. There is also a concern relating to the provision of sites for ancillary educational functions and cultural attractions.

### Leisure

- Develop the leisure offer
- Exploit SSBC land ownership

The feasibility of leisure uses on Seaway car park is undermined by detachment from the retail; circuit. Enhanced connectivity at Pier Hill and new uses on the pier as well as more ambitious intervention on the seafront are very positive moves.

## Public Realm and Movement

- Improve access/connectivity
- Develop railway stations as gateways
- Improve link to/from Seafront
- Stabilise Cliffs
- Exploit SSBC land ownership

This option implies better connectivity at Victoria Circus and public realm enhancements on the seafront.

Connectivity with Seaways is an issue. The stabilisation of the Cliffs is more likely through the vehicle of cultural development on the slip site.

## Delivery

- Assemble sites to improve plan form

As noted above there is insufficient demand or critical mass to achieve the desired impacts

### Option 3: City by the Sea

#### Rationale

- 5.11 Option 3 is a more holistic and comprehensive approach based on the concept of a '**City by the Sea**'. This option sees a series of new urban Quarters evolving and as such is the most ambitious of the three approaches.
- 5.12 Option 3 incorporates a strengthened retail spine but the retail circuits in this option are optimised through a more comprehensive approach to the Seaway site and Chichester Road.
- 5.13 Victoria Avenue takes on a new role with civic functions and mixed uses.
- 5.14 This option goes furthest in reducing severance
- 5.15 Regeneration and enhanced integration of the role and function of adjacent neighbourhoods
- 5.16 The Central Seafront is also treated more comprehensively with a new diagonal link bringing the Royals/Seaway area to life.

## Evaluation of Option 3

### Gateway

- A more attractive place to live and work in and to visit
- Create clear spatial plan for town centre
- Promote good design
- Promote sustainability

Creates a circuit with a strong third anchor, large enough to make a significant clawback of lost spending which also relates well to the boutique area, small office, more diverse evening economy market, creating conditions for stimulating further business growth. The link between Chichester Road and Seaway is a strong design feature.

### Retail

- Improve retail circuit
- Assemble sites to improve plan form
- Respond to forecast demand in core markets
- Upgrade shopping precincts
- Exploit SSBC ownership

To increase the width of the retail offer either side of the High Street, it is crucial to develop new anchor stores on sites that will be attractive to investors.

### Employment and Offices

- Respond to forecast demand in core markets
- Promote small office-based workspace
- Exploit SSBC land ownership

Provides a setting for the north for creating the missing prime destination needed in the office market.

### Residential

- Respond to forecast demand in core markets
- Increase town centre population
- Exploit SSBC land ownership

New housing accommodation brought forward where opportunities allow ensuring the Town Centre benefits from extra footfall, natural surveillance and safety (especially at night). Greater potential to deliver specialised and affordable housing needs and social infrastructure such as new green space/play areas through integration with adjacent neighbourhoods

### Learning and Culture

- Develop quality food/drink
- Develop HE campus
- Develop leisure
- Develop culture
- Exploit SSBC land ownership

Provides scope for strong footfall between teaching and other facilities. Provides scope for growth of the Higher Education Institution offer, but without causing gaps in the creation of the town centre's plan form while waiting for the HEI's investment timetable.

### Leisure

- Develop the leisure offer
- Exploit SSBC land ownership

Relates well to the seafront providing impetus for integration with the seafront market. There is scope in the longer term for a shift in the leisure offer with more business, higher education and conference orientated attractions. Takes advantage of the seaside asset.

## Public Realm and Movement

- Improve access/connectivity
- Develop railway stations as gateways
- Improve link to/from Seafront
- Stabilise Cliffs
- Exploit SSBC land ownership

Develops a coordinated public realm where getting around on foot and on bicycle is made easier and more pleasant and attracts people away from using cars for short trips.

## Delivery

- Assemble sites to improve plan form

Takes full advantage of sites owned by the Council as basis for assembly of larger sites capable of attracting the type, scale and quality of investment needed. The development strategy would be capable of being divided up into deliverable complementary projects.

## Preferred Spatial Option

5.17 Based on a thorough understanding of opportunities and constraints and consultation feedback to date, the preferred overarching rationale for the Southend Central Area Plan is the creation of a **'City by the Sea'** – a change in the function and transformation in the quality of the town centre and seafront and renewal to the remaining parts of the Town Centre.

### Option Box 5

**Are there any significant sustainability or viability reasons why the Borough Council should reject at this stage the City by the Sea option?**

5.18 The remaining sections provide more details about Option 3.



section six



## 6. City by the Sea - The Concept

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- 6.1 Spatially, this concept embraces the vision of Southend as a prosperous regional centre defined by sustainable growth of its urban functions including living, commerce, learning and culture, and the identification of Southend as a location of choice for businesses, residents and visitors.

### Development Strategy

- 6.2 The concept of urban Quarters challenges the current geography of the Central Area which is characterised by a strong sense of zoning. The Plan seeks to establish new urban Quarters which, to a varying extent take on a new mixed sustainable character in line with principles set out in the hierarchy of national, regional and local planning policies. The themes of these new Quarters will be appropriate to their context, either seeking to strengthen the competitive advantage of current uses, or defining new roles contributing to the regeneration of the key sites and the Central Area as a whole. The introduction of new residential uses as part of a broader mix is a key element in achieving a vibrant, living town centre.

- 6.3 The main Quarters and Key sites have been identified as follows:

1. The Victorias
2. London Road
3. The High Street
4. Queensway and Southchurch
5. Elmer square – University Campus
6. Warrior Square
7. Clifftown Quarter
8. St John's, Central Seafront and the Eastern Esplanade
9. The Western Esplanade (part of)
10. Gateway Neighbourhoods

- 6.4 In addition the Plan seeks to address the particular challenges facing older communities adjacent to the core Town Centre. These Gateway Neighbourhoods are facing structural change in terms of land use, economic decline, degraded urban fabric and dereliction. Whilst requiring regeneration in their own right for the existing residential and business community this should be achieved by enhancing their function, role and connectivity with the town centre regeneration.

- 6.5 The main Neighbourhood Gateways have been identified as follows:

- (i) Sutton Road/Grainger Road (including the Greyhound Retail area);
- (ii) North Road/Salisbury Avenue
- (iii) Kursaal Estate and its environs

## Urban Design and Built Form

6.6 In terms of urban design and built form, the 'City by the Sea' concept seeks to transform the Central Area into a more cohesive destination. This is achieved by establishing better physical and functional links between the different Quarters. In physical terms, the Plan has the clear aim of removing impediments and barriers to cross-town movement. In addition to enhancing permeability and the equality of the public realm, the Plan also seeks to encourage better functional links and overlap between Quarters and different market sectors. The creation of urban circuits, particularly those associated with the retail environment is a clear opportunity to enhance the prosperity of the Central Area.

## Access and Movement

6.7 Notwithstanding the current economic situation and Government spending review, significant transportation interventions are necessary to deliver the renewal and physical changes to the Central Area to meet the employment, housing, tourism and leisure needs of residents and visitors. The Borough Council through its delivery plans for the Local Transport Plan and Regional Transport Strategy has developed a Town Centre and Seafront Integrated Transport Scheme to support the principles and objectives of the Core Strategy DPD and Central Area Masterplan (CAM). The preparation of the Borough Council's LTP3 will consider further how best to deliver improved access and movement in the Central Area in the short to medium term having regard to funding and deliverability issues.

6.8 The Integrated Transport Scheme takes advantage of the CAM proposals for the Victorias and City Beach (currently being implemented) which are seen as key to regeneration and integration of the northern end of the Town Centre with the Railway Station and public transport nodes, and the central area and the seafront areas respectively.

6.9 It also takes advantage of the reconfiguration of the town centre in order to develop new opportunity sites in the Quarters (including existing surface car parks), access to new car parks and providing for new and enhanced access for walking, cycling and public transport to and within the Central Area.

6.10 Key elements of the Scheme are:

- Junction modifications on Victoria Avenue at Priory Crescent/Fairfax Drive and West Street/East Street to support South Essex Rapid Transport System (SERT) and cycling strategy, including bus priority/pedestrian and walking schemes;
- Replace/relocate existing car parks to sites adjacent to the main access round the town centre (e.g. Queensway and London Road) and improve the public realm and walking routes in the 'fractured' areas between these main routes and the High Street;

- Create a ‘second shopping street’ along Chichester Road with priority for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport;
- Integrate and enhance railway stations in the Central Area, to promote an ‘Urban Metro’ approach on the 2 main commuter railway lines in the town and the 9 surface stations serving the borough;
- Queensway improved pedestrian proposals to reduce severance and increase permeability between residential areas to the east;
- Introduce a Western Esplanade traffic management parking, walking and cycling scheme – including Sustrans route improvements;
- Develop vehicle parking standards for development that adequately meets the needs of residents in the central area and does not adversely impact on residential streets
- Ensure all schemes, particularly for walking and cycling reinforce the Green Grid Strategy for the town

## Key Moves

6.11 The key moves are:

- **Expansion** of the existing narrow town centre core;
- Supporting greater differentiation in the character and function of the High Street, using Quarters east and west of the main retail route to define a sequence of different High Street experiences or **Segments**;
- Creating Urban Circuits to bring the town centre, particularly the retail environment to life;
- Exploiting opportunities to create better **Integration** across the town centre - between the urban Quarters and to surrounding residential neighbourhoods;
- **Integration** of a number of distinct town centre Quarters with better links to surrounding residential neighbourhoods;
- Delivery of a number of places, as quality destinations, green spaces and **Landmarks**.

## Expansion

6.10 A simple principle of the plan is to increase the development capacity of the town centre. Implicit within this is a more fine-grained network of movement, a greater diversity of activity over an extended day and a greater residential population at Southend’s heart. Intensification is a key component in the transformation from town to City by the Sea.

## Segment

6.11 The High Street is reorganized as a series of spaces with a distinct beginning and end. The differentiation, based on the character of the Quarters, along its length allows a more vibrant and distinct retail-led public experience that links strategically to the Quarters which form around the High Street spine.

6.12 Urban circuits or 'loops' are spatial devices that structure a more intensively utilised network of movement and activity. This option embraces the definition of different circuits which reflect the diversification of the town centre offer. Active frontages, repaired buildings, new streetscape, distinctive public spaces, and landmark buildings, orchestrate the experience of the urban circuit.

### Integration

6.13 One of the main objectives of this plan is to more strongly connect the town centre to the seafront. This option extends the town centre increasing routes for movement, activity and continuous paths of movement which reflects the way a delta meets the water's edge.

6.14 Bridging the level difference between the town centre and the seafront is achieved through numerous interventions. A start has already been made at the end of the High Street, where the culmination of the historic thoroughfare is formalised in a new viewing veranda linked by lifts and stairs to a new pavilion at the plaza edge that provides access on to the Pier.

### Landmarks

6.15 The Central Area Masterplan proposes a rationale for the location and nature of tall landmark structures which is based on three main premises:

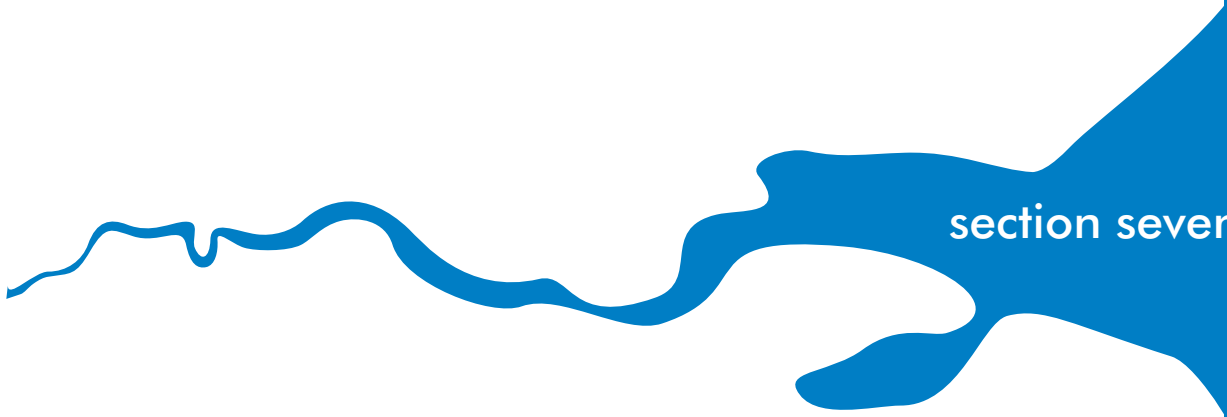
1. Gateway sites or thresholds mark entry into regeneration areas.
2. Stand-alone buildings mark the water's edge along the Eastern Esplanade.
3. Victoria Avenue is reinforced as a grand entry boulevard.

### Gateway Neighbourhoods

6.16 These areas provide an opportunity to enhance and 'green' gateway environments to the town complementing its role as a business and visitor centre, provide future development opportunities particularly to meet affordable and more specialised housing needs and new recreational and community uses. They should also accommodate 'room to grow' modern business facilities.

#### Option Box 6

**Will the above Strategy for development, urban design and built form deliver the concept of the City by the Sea?**



section seven

## 7. The Quarters and Key Sites

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### 7.1 The Victorias

#### The Character of the Area

**Existing Form:** This area which is situated on either side of Victoria Avenue forms a gateway to the town centre. It is characterised by high rise and civic buildings and Southend Victoria Railway Station.

With the exception of the court building, library and civic offices, the architecture of the remaining buildings is bland and uninspiring, symbolic of speculative office building in the 1960s and 1970s. The former South Essex College Campus buildings are currently empty awaiting either redevelopment or conversion.

**Land Use:** The predominant land uses are offices to the west of Victoria Avenue and civic uses to the east including a magistrate's court, council offices, library and police station.

**Activity:** During a normal working day there is significant pedestrian movement along Victoria Avenue to the railway station and the town centre. The road is also a principal access route for vehicles to the town centre, the seafront and beyond. The volume of vehicular movements along the main roads presents a significant barrier for pedestrians and cyclists moving between the urban Quarters. Some improvements are however underway including the redesign of Victoria Square that will create more direct routes and activity spaces around the station.

#### Transformation

A planning brief is being prepared to help guide the regeneration and redevelopment of this area with the intention to adopt the brief as a Supplementary Planning Document in 2010. The brief will be subject to consultation and after adoption it will inform the submission version of this plan.

#### Sites

##### Land East and West of Victoria Avenue

Leading Land Use	Workspace, residential and civic uses
Supporting Land Uses	Hotel, limited bars and restaurants and leisure, health and fitness, local small retail, public realm and green space
Locations	Throughout the area ground floors should be active with bars, restaurants, leisure, and local retail as commercial viability allows.

Supplementary Guidance

The Southend Central Area Masterplan contains further advice and a planning brief is also in preparation which will, once adopted, provide more detailed guidance.

Urban Design

Victoria Avenue will become a sustainable mixed use Quarter with enhancements to the formal Boulevard character of the street befitting its gateway status.

The Quarter will be transformed with a new mix of uses including offices, residential, civic functions, commercial and local retail, hotel and health and fitness facilities.

The existing environment will need to be largely remodelled to accommodate a more complex, fine-grained and sustainable urban form that is capable of sufficient commercial and economic robustness to avoid future redundancy, as has been the legacy.

#### Option Box 7

**Alternative options could include:**

**7a Allow the amount of office space to significantly reduce, in favour of a more residential community**

**and/or**

**7b Encourage further and higher education provision**

## 7.2 London Road Broadway

### The Character of the Area

**Existing Form:** The area is defined by Queensway to the north with principal buildings fronting on to London Road. It forms one of several entry points to the town centre and High Street. The area is characterised by a varied architecture dominated by three larger buildings, the Odeon Cinema, Sainsbury's food store and the new high rise development currently under construction that will provide residential accommodation for students, a new public car park and new retail and restaurant units on the ground floor.

The arrangement and siting of buildings on the ground make the area relatively impermeable from the north. Pedestrians wishing to enter the area from the Victorias and the railway station to the north have to follow inconvenient and indirect routes to access London Road and the High Street although the current reconfiguration of Victoria Square will bring about some improvements.

**Land Use:** The dominant land uses are the cinema together with a range of cafes and restaurants. The banking sector is also represented together with some retail outlets. The western end of London Road is anchored by a medium sized Sainsbury food store.

**Activity:** The area has become transformed in recent years into an active café and restaurant Quarter that provides a buoyant day time and evening attraction. Consequently there is significant pedestrian activity in the area including movements to and from the High Street. There is a taxi rank in London Road which is one of the principal dropping off and picking up points for the town centre. The street is very wide and this encourages private cars to also use London Road to drop off and pick up passengers. This contributes to significant vehicle movements and high levels of pedestrian activity which restricts potential alternative uses.

### Character Area Proposals

There is some uncertainty over the future of the Sainsburys foodstore. In the event of Sainsburys finding an alternative site, London Road will play a key role in providing urban scale and quality to complement Victoria Avenue. In this eventuality, the Borough Council will bring forward a detailed planning brief to help orchestrate the reshaping of the Sainsburys site whilst also capitalising on the opportunities this may bring to addressing some of the existing weaknesses of the area.

Improved linkages will be provided to Victoria Square and the proposed new crossing points for pedestrians moving to and from the Victorias Quarter and the railway station. Alongside greater permeability and an enhanced network of public spaces, London Road will be an attractive location for landmark office development, and enhanced retail and leisure offer and residential units at upper levels.

In the event of Sainsburys staying, either in their current format or a revised type of store, significant opportunities to enhance the location still exist.



Old College Square and Victoria Circus are to be refurbished and remodelled to improve the street scene. In conjunction with this the Council has agreed that the eastern part of London Road could possibly be partially pedestrianised in order to extend the High Street pedestrian area. In addition there is the potential for new pedestrian connections to extend the existing street pattern from London Road to Queensway and to Elmer Square. Allied to this, perpendicular [or echelon] on-street car parking could be introduced in the western section of London Road along with a new taxi rank.

## Sites

Leading Land Uses	Offices, retail, food and drink and leisure
Supporting Land Uses	Residential
Locations	Ground floors should be active with bars, restaurants, leisure, banks and retail. Offices and residential should be located predominately on upper floors.
Supplementary Guidance	The Southend Central Area Masterplan contains further advice and guidance. In addition, should Sainsburys decide to either vacate or remodel their store, a planning brief will be prepared to guide the future planning process.
Urban Form	<p>The opportunity exists, should Sainsburys relocate, for a landmark development to define the space between Victoria Station and a reconfigured Queensway and London Road. The city scale of the town centre should be signalled by urban scaled blocks to the Queensway elevation. The provision of active retail frontages to Queensway coupled with possible arcaded entry to the High Street that incorporates integrated signage and artwork to building elevations would all combine to signal entry to the core town centre.</p> <p>The Odeon building could be expanded to accommodate more cinema screens and/or retail frontages. In addition the Odeon elevation to the passage leading to Victoria Circus could be redesigned to create active frontages to the High Street and Queensway.</p>

## Option Box 8

-Should Sainsburys decide to vacate their site, alternative options could include:

8a - Redevelop with a smaller scale scheme comprising expansion of leisure and entertainment uses and a substantial area of public green space

and/or

8b – Relocate the Odeon Cinema to allow a comprehensive scheme to integrate Queensway and the High Street with active frontages to north and south.

and/or

8c - Realign the Queensway Road corridor to the north to provide for a larger developable area at the Sainsburys site and potentially create a second frontage onto Queensway

and/or

8d - Redesign London Road to make it a more pleasant environment for people whilst retaining access for dropping off and picking up, taxis and night time car access to bars and restaurants.

and/or

8e - Redevelop an area between the Odeon Cinema and Sainsburys to provide an urban 'pocket park'.

## 7.3 The High Street

### The Character of the Area

**Existing Form:** The High Street is almost 800 metres in length. It lacks landmarks and points of interest to counteract this length and linearity although the railway bridge and road crossings do act as reference points. There is an opportunity to differentiate the distinct character zones that it passes through. It is for the most part pedestrianised and it is, in terms of function, the single unifying element linking all the Quarters of the central area with each other.

The repaving that was carried out 7 years ago, although reasonably well-executed, concentrates attention on a heavily patterned floorscape that will be in need of replacement in phases over the next 5-10 years.

Despite the High Street being on an axis to the coast, due to levels there is no sense of the sea until the landmark lift tower and the sea itself come into view towards its southern end. Although the lift, ramps and stairs are designed to improve access down to the seafront, the termination of the High Street is weak and requires a clearly defined public space to help orientate the visitor and to mark the transition between town and sea - a space to pause and enjoy the magnificent views.

To the north, the High Street is severed from Victoria Station and Victoria Avenue and the Civic Centre by the new retail unit at Victoria Shopping Centre and the Victoria Circus roundabout. A scheme to remodel Victoria Square will be completed by March 2011 which will improve permeability and access to and from the town centre in conjunction with the other proposals for the London Road Quarter described above.

In terms of urban form the High Street not only feels too long and linear, but it also lacks quality and character that ought to be reinforced by landmarks to give it a rhythm and legibility although the new University buildings, particularly where they punch through to the High Street, demonstrate opportunities and solutions for the future. The character and quality of building facades is inconsistent. There is no sense of the sea. There are poor visual and physical connections to the Quarters to the east and west where the potential exists for the expansion of the town centre on the shoulders of the High Street.

**Land Use:** The High Street contains the usual range of major multiple retail outlets normally associated with a sub regional centre. The High Street is anchored at either end by shopping precincts, The Victoria and The Royals Shopping Centres, although even these lack the quality feel of competing malls in nearby towns. The retail units in the High Street are interspersed with cafes, restaurants, coffee bars, banks and building societies. The central section is dominated by South Essex College and the University of Essex which has introduced an added vibrancy to the area. The upper floors of buildings along the High Street are used in part for office and educational uses but many upper floors are vacant and poorly maintained

The Council has commissioned a further Retail Study that will provide advice on future policy for retail and other town centre uses including the night time economy. This study will be used to inform the submission version of this Plan.

**Activity:** There are strong pedestrian movements along and across the High Street at certain times of the day although the retail circuits are poorly defined and there are problems of permeability, legibility and connection to the Quarters to the east and west. Vehicles cross the High Street at a number of locations and a short section is open to traffic. Southend Central railway station and the Travel Centre are both located within a short walking distance of the High Street.

## Character Area Proposals

The Council, has commissioned a new Retail Study. The final report will contain further advice on the future direction of retail policy in the town centre building on the foundations laid in the Central Area Masterplan.

This draft Plan reproduces the proposals and thinking from the Central Area Masterplan by seeking to re-define the High Street as a sequence of distinct episodes which respond to the strengthening and formation of the different Quarters east and west of the main retail route. The proposed retail circuit at Tylers expands the commercial core eastwards and the Clifftown Quarter to the west will be further brought alive and invigorated by cafes, bars, restaurants and creative enterprises day and night in addition to new residential provision.

The public realm could be redesigned to reinforce the aspirations of the Plan and the integration of old and new. Co-ordinated street scene improvements will be used to emphasise the east-west links, to create legible routes to public transport stops, to indicate new choices of movement and to mark junctions as significant events. Trees and other vertical interventions – public art, kiosks, seating and so on – will be used as permeable room dividers to break down the visual length of the High Street and to articulate the journey down it. Historic and new key buildings and vistas could be enhanced by a strategic lighting strategy and by artwork. Consideration should be given to bringing the railway bridge to life. There is also an opportunity to introduce contemporary awnings and canopies to enliven the High Street experience.

The recent closure of the York Road Market presents an opportunity to consider alternatives. The Council, in conjunction with Renaissance Southend Limited, has commissioned a detailed assessment of the options. The outcome from this study will be used to inform the submission version of this Plan.

The Central Area Masterplan contained a proposal to allow taxis and service vehicles access along the High Street at strictly limited times. This would provide some ‘passive surveillance’ and could reduce potential community safety issues. It also accommodates flexibility to reintroduce other controlled traffic in the future, if required.

In any future scenario the High Street must be emphatically a public space for pedestrians, where vehicles enter by invitation. It will be an integrated shared surface, free of white-lining, tarmac, signage, railings and all the paraphernalia associated with highway engineering, where subtle cues in surfacing and layout encourage careful negotiation on the part of both pedestrians and motorists. In the short term, new interventions could be incorporated into the existing paving; a strategy will be developed for a coherent redesign of the floorscape, which may need replacement as redevelopment proceeds.

This plan carries forward the Central Area Masterplan proposals to transform the southern end of the High Street into Southend’s Balcony – a public space animated by remodelled active frontages associated with The Royals, the refurbished historic Palace Hotel and the extension of the public realm to the St John’s Quarter. The longer term vision is of a radical, landmark redevelopment which will connect the town to the Pier and Adventure Island by a series of multi-level indoor and outdoor destination spaces. In the shorter term it may be possible to create an upper level public piazza which would work independently as well as forming the first phase of the larger and longer term project.

## Sites

Leading Land Uses	Retail
Supporting Land Uses	Cafes, restaurants, bars, banks, building societies, hotels, leisure uses, offices and residential
Locations	Ground floors should be active with retail, restaurants, cafes and leisure uses. Offices and residential should be located on upper floors.
Supplementary Guidance	The Southend Central Area Masterplan contains further advice and guidance. In addition, planning briefs will be prepared for key sites to guide development and change.
Urban Form	<p>When redevelopment opportunities arise along the High Street frontage the Council will seek the use of strong vertical elements to reduce the perceived length of the High Street and to stress east-west connections.</p> <p>It is anticipated that the majority of the existing stock of buildings along the High Street will remain and be enhanced over time by owners. In order to bring about improvements to the appearance and character of the different sections of the High Street the Council will prepare detailed guidance for the design of new shop fronts and for the re-cladding and decoration of existing buildings to guide building owners. Consideration will also be given as to how the 'backs' of High Street premises (particularly where they front onto Chichester Road) can be encouraged to project a more attractive and active frontage.</p> <p>The Council will seek a unique design solution for the floorscape of the High Street in order to create a linear route that links the Quarters together and reflects their individual character alongside a programme to remove unnecessary signage and other visual clutter. The intersection of east-west routes will be emphasised by the creation of a strong public realm at significant junction points. The High Street has the potential to become a unique and special linear space that has all of the best characteristics of similar spaces in other European cities such as the 'Ramblas' in</p>

Barcelona and Strøget (literally "the sweep") in Copenhagen, Denmark - probably the longest pedestrian shopping Street in Europe.

### Option Box 9

**9a - Concentrate retail activity in the northern and southern sections of the High Street (in and around The Victorias and The Royals shopping centres) with cafes, bars, restaurants, banks and building societies and smaller scale retail uses in the central part of the High Street**

and/or

**9b – Extend major retail activity into the St John’s Quarter including the central seafront**

or

**9c - Follow a laissez-faire policy that allows the market to determine where retail and other town centre uses should be located in and along the High Street**

## 7.4 Queensway and Southchurch

### The Character of the Area

**Existing Form:** The area is dominated by a 1960s tower residential block, Quantock, and Queensway House which contains flats, a former health centre and a multi storey car park. Southchurch Road contains a mix of older, low rise, buildings that have a somewhat drab and rundown appearance. To the north of Queensway is a major development site (including former B&Q site, Focus Youth Centre and municipal car park). Queensway acts as both a major highway approach to the town centre and a ring road around the town centre. Its scale and highway orientated design of its immediate envelope mean that it tends to act as a barrier between the town centre and its outlying neighbourhoods. For pedestrians and cyclists, crossing the roads by way of underpasses and indirect routes can be unpleasant and counter-intuitive. In places, the footway is separated from the carriageway by stretches of grass and shrubs, resulting in areas of path which lack natural surveillance from passing cars and give the impression of being potentially unsafe. Queensway’s roundabouts and verges are amongst the most significant green wedges in the town centre, but as green spaces they are underused and could be redesigned to enhance their function as city gateways.

**Land Use:** Southchurch Road plays a role as a secondary retail and commercial frontage and health care provision. Beyond Southchurch Road the area is residential with a health

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centre and multi storey car park. To the north of Queensway adjacent to Victoria Station is a large development site and public car park and Focus Youth Centre

**Activity:** Southchurch Road is a principal route for traffic entering the town centre from the east in order to use the car parks in and around the Chichester Road area. Pedestrian footfall reflects the status of the street as a secondary shopping location and route to the primary shopping area on the High Street.

## Character Area Proposals

### Sites

Leading Land Uses	Secondary retail
Supporting Land Uses	Commercial, residential, health care and support, car parking
Locations	<p>The redevelopment of the plots in the quadrant between Southchurch Road, Queensway and Victoria Circus represents a major opportunity to transform the area.</p> <p>A corner location fronting Queensway to the east would be the preferred location for major car park. Short Street development site location for supermarket led mixed use site</p>
Supplementary Guidance	The Southend Central Area Masterplan contains further advice and guidance. In addition, planning briefs will be prepared for key sites to guide development and change.
Urban Form	<p>The Central Area Masterplan envisages greater definition of the boundary with Queensway with a mix of residential, retail and commercial uses. This area is also suitable for a substantial amount of car parking given easy access to the High Street and Queensway. The new Queensway neighbourhood will also benefit from closer connections with the new community quarter at Warrior Square. The Masterplan sets out eight principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Student residential and retail/commercial fronting on to a new public square;</li> <li>▪ Direct ground level link from the new public space to Victoria Circus;</li> <li>▪ Leisure facility provides a focus for the public space;</li> </ul>

- Enclosure of the rear of Southchurch road blocks provides continuous building frontage onto Chichester Road;
- Walkway connects onto car parking podium roof utilised as outdoor amenity space;
- Dense planting to Queensway contributes to the establishment of an 'urban forest' alongside this traffic route;
- Refurbished retail, commercial frontages to Southchurch Road extend the high Street retail offer; and
- Tall residential development to Queensway.

In relation to Queensway there is an opportunity to create more user friendly at-grade pedestrian and cycle crossings on the key east-west links. In addition a landscape design and public art scheme could be developed to open up and emphasise vistas at roundabouts, wherever appropriate and to plant the verges as an 'urban forest'.

### Option Box 10

Alternative options could include:

**10a – Comprehensively redevelop the area to provide new commercial office and residential uses linked to and including a large supermarket led development scheme on the former B&Q site on Short Street**

or

**10b – Limit redevelopment to the north side of Southchurch Road to include a new multi storey car park at the eastern end.**

## 7.5 Elmer Square – Learning and Cultural Campus

### The Character of the Area

**Existing Form:** Currently this area comprises a surface level car park and a multi-storey car park. Visually the area is dominated by the new buildings for the University and the rear of properties in the High Street to the east and south. Elmer Avenue consists of a terrace of residential properties that overlook this site from the west and the northern edge is formed by the Farringdon Service Road which backs on to the rear of the low rise

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secondary retail units in Queens Road. To the south there is a narrow link through to the High Street fronted by the vacant Prudential Office building.

**Land Use:** Elmer Square is in the heart of the University Campus on the edge of the town centre in an area of transition with the residential areas to the west. As noted above the dominant land use is car parking.

**Activity:** This is one of the main car park areas for the town centre. Consequently there are high levels of vehicle and pedestrian movements linked with the car parks. In addition the adjoining University buildings and residential area and the High Street shops add to the levels of pedestrian movement and activity.

## Character Area Proposals

### Sites

Leading Land Uses	Education and library
Supporting Land Uses	Hotel, retail, students union, cafes and residential uses adjoin this site.
Locations	Southend has an increasingly important role as an educational and cultural hub, with the University of Essex forging a strong presence north of Southend Central Railway Station. Elmer Square represents a major opportunity to deliver the sustainable growth of higher and education and culture and will be the focus of the University and College continued expansion. The site will also enhance permeability with public realm improvements strengthening links to Queens Road, the High Street and towards the Southend Central Railway Station and the College and University.
Supplementary Guidance	In January 2009 the Council adopted a development brief for the site which had been prepared jointly with Renaissance Southend Limited.
Urban Form	The aim of the Elmer Square Development Brief is to deliver a scheme incorporating: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ A new 21<sup>st</sup> Century Library meeting both the requirements of a modern replacement for the current central library alongside the requirement of an expanding higher and further education sector in the town centre;</li><li>▪ A new building of 11,000m<sup>2</sup> for South Essex</li></ul>

- College to meet their expansion and growth needs in Southend;
  - A new building of 7,500m<sup>2</sup> for the University of Essex incorporating new teaching space alongside growth in the University's business incubation space.
  - Accommodation for Southend Adult Community College to enable it to establish a presence within the town centre, and
  - High quality public realm to be structured according to the main pedestrian route and vehicle routes and meeting points. A new public square of approximately 1,300m<sup>2</sup> will be created to act as affront door to the building and be a busy and vibrant location next to the High Street. The square is defined by the landmark SEC building to the south.
- Refurbish prudential building to provide more attractive façade, active and vibrant ground floor and enhanced route through to the High Street

### Option Box 11

**Alternative options were considered during the preparation of both the Central Area Masterplan and the development brief described above. Given the status of the development brief it is no longer appropriate to consider alternative options.**

## 7.6 Warrior Square Car Park and Adjoining Land

Warrior Square surface car park dominates the area. It is bounded to the east by Queensway, Whitegate Road to the south and Chichester Road to the west. The car park is interspersed with buildings comprising Warriors Swimming Pool, and several small scale offices in converted terraced villa style dwelling houses. To the north is one of the few green public open space in the town centre known as Warrior Square Gardens. The gardens are also bounded to the north and east by terraced villa type properties some of which are still in residential use. The Gardens and northern terrace are designated as a Conservation Area.

The Gardens are set for transformation as part a major landscaping project designed to turn the area into a stunning and welcoming outdoor amenity and allow it to reach its full potential as a town centre garden space.

Renaissance Southend Limited has recently commissioned a study to prepare a Masterplan and brief for the redevelopment of the car park area. The outcome of the study will be used to inform the submission version of this Plan.

## Character Area Proposals

### Sites

Leading Land Uses	Mixed uses to include offices and residential
Supporting Land Uses	small-scale retailing, restaurants and bars , and sympathetic car parking
Locations	The area requires a comprehensive design solution that is capable of being developed in phases
Supplementary Guidance	Renaissance Southend Limited has commissioned the preparation of a development brief that will include an assessment of options for this site.
Urban Form	The corner site on Queensway requires a prominent building that also addresses Warrior Square. An active frontage is required along the entire length of the site frontage to the Square and Chichester Road. There should be a lower massing on Whitegate Road deferring to site context. Consideration should also be given to the creation of a new street for residential frontages. There is the potential to incorporate site related car parking in the central part of the site underneath podium roof collective amenity areas.

### Option Box 12

**What new facilities should be introduced into this area to enhance its vitality and viability?**

## 7.7 Clifftown

### The Character of the Area

**Existing Form:** This area lies to the south of the London to Southend railway line and west of the High Street. It includes the shops and other premises that form the west side of the High Street and the commercial and residential hinterland beyond.

A significant proportion within and around the area is designated as Clifftown Conservation Area.

**Land Use:** The area is characterised by retail, food and drink premises, commercial uses and residential. The Central Area Masterplan proposes to support the evolution of the Clifftown area as an area with a strong food, drink and retail offer. The main focus for this will be development opportunities on the Council owned Alexandra and Clarence car parks. Within the Conservation area the objective is to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area. This Quarter will also have a strong cultural identity, capitalising on the fine grain historic street form, attractive historic character and links to the Royal Terrace and the Cliffs. There is an opportunity for small studio style workspace in the area. Associated with improvements to Southend Central Railway Station, the redevelopment of Central House on Clifftown Road will play a key role in redefining this part of the town centre.

**Activity:** The area is at the interface between the traditional High Street and the central Seafront. It therefore attracts visitors and day trippers as well as traditional shoppers. This multiplicity and overlap of functions means that the area has a special verve and vitality that transcends the seasons.

## Character Area Proposals

### Sites

Leading Land Uses	Commercial, restaurants and bars, retail in proximity to the High Street, niche retail units.
Supporting Land Uses	Residential
Locations	The main locations for change are Southend Central Station, Clarence Road Car Park, and Alexandra Street Car Park.
Supplementary Guidance	The Southend Central Area Masterplan contains further advice and guidance. In addition, planning briefs will be prepared for key sites to guide development and change.
Urban Form	The Central Area Masterplan sets out the key principles to guide change and development at the locations described below:

### Southend Central Station

1. Refurbishment of Southend Central Station buildings;
2. Station forecourt cleared of surface level car parking and designed as a signature public

space.

3. Central House redeveloped for new larger retail units with frontage on High street and Clifftown Road; new office/residential development above; possible tall feature building; new public realm opportunities.
4. Restored building elevations and new Shopfronts on Clifftown Road to extend the retail frontage around a new walking circuit;

### **Clarence Road Car Park**

5. Office/retail/residential blocks around public 'workyards';
6. Thoroughfare from Nelson Street and Nelson Mews;
7. New public square on the corner of Clarence Road and Alexandra Street with restricted access to service vehicles only;
8. repaved street to designate 'town heart';
9. Streetscape and landscape design designates a walking circuit through Clifftown from Southend Central Station to Pier Hill;

### **Alexandra Street Car Park**

10. Ground floor retail, food and drink units between 100m<sup>2</sup> and 500 m<sup>2</sup>;
11. New public lanes for small business opportunities and outdoor dining; restricted service vehicle access only;
12. residential units above and behind;
13. Possible new units or extensions to the back of the High Street units.

The character of the streets and spaces around Clarence Road and Alexandra Street should foster the growth of the small creative enterprises, small specialised niche retail units, workshops, restaurants and bars proposed by the Masterplan. In keeping with the fine grain of the buildings to be refurbished, the Quarter would have an intimate feel, of small streets, lanes, mews and yards. The main public space in the heart of the Quarter is a small square within a network of lanes and mews, appropriate for market, performance, meeting places and café culture activities.

The public realm would for the most part be hard-surfaced and uncluttered for flexibility of use.

In the north of the Clifftown Quarter a new public plaza could be created on the south side of Southend Central Station. The station is at present hidden away from the High street, with a very low quality forecourt dominated by cars.

Despite its modest size this proposed square would be intensely used by virtue of its central location adjacent to a main transport hub and very close to the University and College and retail core. In addition the junction between Clifftown Road and the High Street should be treated as one of the proposed series of nodes on the High street which respond to changes in the character of the adjacent Quarters and direct attention to key buildings and views. It is essential that the design detail of both areas is of a robust and very high quality.

### Option Box 13

**What additional facilities should be introduced into this area to enhance its vitality and viability?**

## 7.8 St John's, Central Seafront and the Eastern Esplanade

### The Character of the Area

**Existing Form:** The biggest challenge for this Plan is how to more strongly integrate the High Street and town centre with the central seafront and Esplanade. The main problem is the diverse nature of the component parts and the challenging topography which in part contributes to the fragmentation of the Quarter. The east side of the High Street forms the southern end of the town centre anchored by The Royals shopping centre. To the east of this and south of the railway line there is a more fragmented area of large pieces of real estate that contain modern office blocks, the Tylers Avenue car park, the former York Road market site (currently closed), and the Travel Centre. This component part is severed from the High Street by Chichester Avenue which at present functions as a main access route for cars and service vehicles accessing town centre premises and shoppers' car parks, and for buses serving the Travel Centre.

Adjoining this fragmented area is an established residential area based on a traditional street pattern containing houses of different sizes and tenures.

This residential area is somewhat isolated from the town centre because of the poor connectivity across the barrier created by Chichester Avenue to the High Street. In the other direction Queensway forms yet another barrier severing links with and into the residential areas to the east. Chichester Avenue and Queensway are the principal means of access to The Royals multi storey car park and the Seaways car park.

There is a dramatic change in level from the southern end of the High Street to the Central Seafront and Eastern Esplanade which is the final component part of this Quarter. This is a crucial link which joins the High Street and possible new retail areas to the entire seafront, despite a challenging drop in level from Pier Hill. This area contains the entrance to the pier, theme park and part of the central seafront. The area is dominated by the Palace Hotel which has recently been extensively modernised and refurbished to a high standard. Below this on the Marine Parade itself there is a terrace facing the sea that consists mainly of large amusement arcades that are interspersed with smaller food and drink establishments. In stark contrast to the grandeur of the Palace Hotel building, this frontage displays a visually brash, cheerful and exuberant appearance, which is quite literally 'electrifying' after darkness has fallen. Some would argue that this particular frontage represents a significant defining feature of the Southend identity that should be celebrated rather than berated. Behind this frontage, and largely hidden from view, is St Johns Church and churchyard separated by a terrace of houses in Herbert Road from the bleak and sprawling Seaways car park that sits behind the amusement centres that front on to the Marine Parade and the Eastern Esplanade and the night clubs that front on to Lucy Road.

The final component of this Quarter is the theme park and the City Beach area. This part of the seafront is livelier than the Western Esplanade. It contains an intensive concentration of leisure activities with appeal for all ages which give this real potential as a Great British Resort. However, consideration should be given to expanding the tourism / leisure offer to increase current low visitor spend in this area. There is a major opportunity with the public realm proposals to consolidate major development proposals along the seafront and to secure proper integration with the town centre particularly via the area to the north currently operating as Seaway Car Park and Pier Hill.

The entire foreshore south of the seawall is designated for International and National sites for nature conservation and provides an attractive environment for both marine activities (sailing, bathing etc) and more passive enjoyment of the natural habitats. There are excellent opportunities to design high quality visitor facilities that interpret the natural habitat giving visitors a better understanding of the ecosystems that support the various birds and other wildlife. All future activity and development will need to ensure that they do not adversely affect the interests of the nature conservation designations on the foreshore.

**Land Use:** The High Street is dominated by retail and commercial premises. The seafront contains hotels, leisure, and food and drink establishments. Behind these there are

extensive areas of car parking interspersed with commercial uses. This represents an area of poorly defined transition from the town centre to the residential area beyond.

**Activity:** A number of different functions collide and mix in this Quarter. The traditional High Street shopping area meets with the main seafront where visitors and day trippers gather to enjoy the many delights of the beach, shoreline, pier and seafront attractions. Funding has been obtained for the first stage of the City Beach public realm improvement scheme that will transform the seafront promenade and Eastern Esplanade into a single and cohesive high quality pedestrian friendly public space that will make this part of the seafront both “special” and “unique”. The Council is also developing proposals for the second phase of City Beach from the Kursaal to Esplanade House. There are potential major development sites on the sea front at Marine Plaza and Esplanade House. Both these sites have valid planning approvals Further investigations are required in order to inform the submission Plan which will set out proposals for land-use/mix and delivery.

There are high levels of activity all year round although the nature, intensity and the centres of gravity move with the seasons. Throughout the year Chichester Avenue and Queensway are the principal access routes for visitors using vehicles. The usage of the car parks ebbs and flows like the tides with the days of the weeks and the seasons.

## Character Area Proposals

### Sites

Leading Land Uses	Retail and leisure including the entrance to the pier
Supporting Land Uses	Residential, food and drink, visitor accommodation,
Locations	Tylers Avenue could be at the heart of a new retail circuit, providing a high quality retail offer to complement the High Street. In addition to enhancing the offer, a high quality public realm and new provision for buses the objective would be to create a relaxing and pleasurable shopping experience whilst also encouraging sustainable movement patterns. Seaways has the potential to become a new retail, residential and leisure mixed use hub, playing a key role in creating critical mass in the St Johns Quarter, and redefining the Central Seafront and Pier Hill area and the connection between town centre and seafront. The Golden Mile in particular is a fantastic opportunity to further develop and enhance the leisure and tourism offer
Supplementary Guidance	The Southend Central Area Masterplan contains further advice and guidance. Renaissance



Southend Limited has recently commissioned a study to prepare a brief and Masterplan for the St Johns and Heygate areas. This will be used to inform the submission version of this Plan.

## Urban Form

The Central Area Masterplan sets out the key principles to guide change and development, These include:

1. Key buildings should have a retail anchor tenancy with upper terrace level of food and beverage. The main retail blocks should have two trading floors.
2. There is potential to create 'pavilion' extensions to The Royals shopping centre in order to increase the trading floor areas and to restore active frontages.
3. Remodelling of the urban form to create a north-south axis that makes a clear sightline from Queensway to the sea.
4. The creation of a new link designed around the 'Spanish Steps' concept of stepped public urban space providing not only a direct connection to the seafront, but also providing gathering spaces and a setting for an urban spectacle.
5. Improve access and circulation into and around the area.

The entire environment would be public space rather than highway. East-west connections between new and old should be strengthened by tree planting and by marking junctions as recognisable nodes to breakdown the psychological length of the existing streets. A new open space should be based around St Johns Church and including its churchyard to form the strategic hub of this Quarter, joining Tylers to the north to Seaways in the south-east. The Royals on the west and the new mixed use developments to the east would bring activity and natural surveillance to the space, as will its location between two main paths to the seafront. Proposal for Seaways should also include significant residential development and possible tall buildings to take advantage of the estuary views

The Eastern Esplanade is livelier than its western

counterpart. The concentration of existing and future 'City Beach' leisure activities with appeal for all ages gives this real potential as a great British Resort. It should transform into a promenade for people, not a dual carriageway with an uninspired seaside pavement. Its landscape needs to provide strong and memorable identity as the seaside spot where we go to have fun! The City Beach public realm improvement scheme, currently under construction, will significantly change the character and appearance of this part of the seafront.

#### Option Box 14

**14 – Provision should be made to actively regenerate the 'Golden Mile' based on options for planned intervention into the existing built form by either:**

**14a - minimal intervention leading to loss of a few units to allow a punch through from seaway car park area to the esplanade**

or

**14b - greater intervention by removal of substantial number of units to allow a new 'street' with retail opportunities at right angles to the seafront and facilitate the broader 'Spanish steps concept.**

or

**14c - removal of all units except for quality buildings i.e. nationally and locally listed buildings**

## 7.9 The Western Esplanade

### The Character of the Area

**Existing Form:** This Area has a less developed, low-key seaside character, less frenetic than the Central Seafront and Eastern Esplanade. There are stunning sea views, Victorian heritage and extensive greenery on the cliff slope. It is a place for a brisk walk along the prom, or a stroll in the gardens. The area has a somewhat tired and rundown appearance. However some extremely good qualities already exist, but they need to be revealed, enhanced and connected. The built area at the top of the cliffs comprises the Cliff town Conservation area.

The Western Esplanade is over dominated by tarmac and vehicles, with little seating, interest or recognition of seafront location. The gardens are severed from the promenade by the dual carriageway and parking. There is an unclear path system with many ad-hoc 'desire lines'. An engineering study has been commissioned by the Council to assess the stability of the cliff and advise on remediation measures. There is one area of cliff slippage that requires repair.

**Land Use:** This is essentially a leisure area interspersed with extensive areas of seafront car parking.

**Activity:** The areas experiences great extremes of usage which are dictated by the seasons and weather and planned special events.

## Character Area Proposals

### Sites

Leading Land Uses	Quiet leisure, seaside enjoyment, including sailing and cultural activities (potential Museum)
Supporting Land Uses	Car parking, walking ,cycling
Locations	The area comprises two distinctive parts, The Cliffs and The Western Esplanade
Supplementary Guidance	The Southend Central Area Masterplan contains further advice and guidance. In addition, planning briefs may also be prepared for to guide development and change.
Urban Form	<p>The Cliffs: The remedial work to stabilise the Cliffs will, when commissioned, incorporate additional measures to provide development opportunities for a new museum. The legacy of Victorian structures and formal garden remnants could be retained and reinstated to their former splendour. Use of Museum and other interventions to stabilise cliff slips</p> <p>There is an opportunity to create a trail from the town centre connecting the conservation area, cultural and garden features. This work could also include a rationalisation and upgrade of the path system and seating. In addition there is scope to upgrade the Cliffs Pavilion outdoor space and improve its connection to the Cliffs. This includes the renovation of the historic Cliff lift which reopened in May 2010.</p>

The Western Esplanade: The popular seafront parking should be retained, but the occasional bays could be removed to make strong pedestrian links from the seafront to key points in the cliffs. Consideration will be given to additional public realm improvements.

### Option Box 15

**What additional facilities should be introduced into this area to enhance its vitality and viability?**

## 7.10 Gateway Neighbourhoods

### The Character of the areas

The Gateway Neighbourhoods are facing structural change in terms of land use, social and economic decline. They are typified by a mix of older, outmoded or redundant industrial and commercial uses which in some places conflict with existing housing areas and housing which is run down, or compromised by dereliction, poor urban fabric and lack of social and recreational amenities.

The main Neighbourhood Gateways have been identified as follows:

- Sutton Road/Grainger Road (including the Greyhound Retail area);
- North Road/Salisbury Avenue
- Kursaal Estate and its environs

### Option Box 16

**16 - The Gateway Neighbourhoods should play a key role in meeting the objectives for the town centre by:**

**16a (i) - Enhancing gateway environments to the town complementing its role as a business and visitor destination**

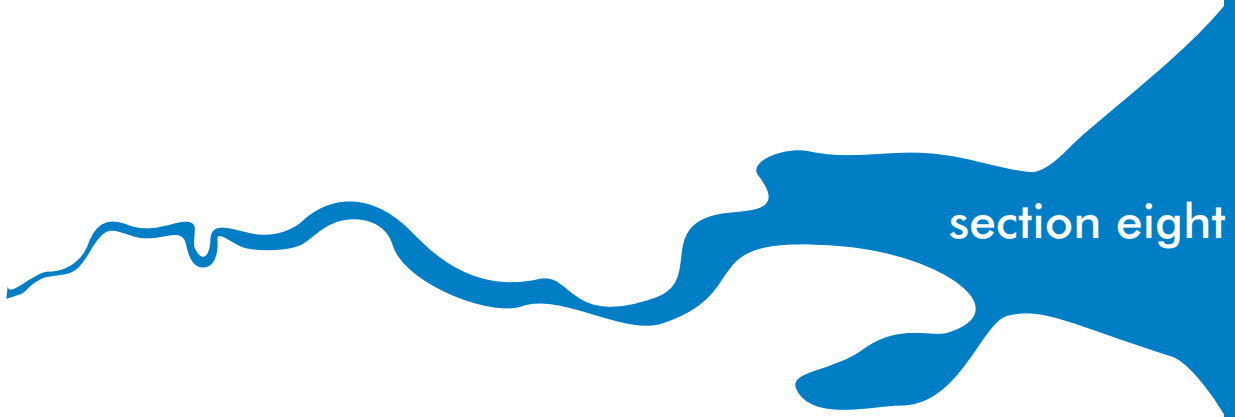
**16a (ii) - Providing for new and improved residential neighbourhoods to meet identified housing needs.**

**16a (iii) - Providing for new and improved social care, recreational and community uses**

**16a (iv) - Reinforcing the business function of the town centre and providing local employment opportunities**

**and/or**

**16e - The Gateway Neighbourhoods should be developed as discreet entities with regeneration focussing on the needs of the existing communities with particular attention to protecting existing employment areas from loss.**



section eight

## 8. Development Management

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- 8.1 To ensure that future development and investment in the plan area delivers the aspirations of the Community Plan, the Core Strategy DPD and the AAP there will need to be clear policy guidance against which to assess planning applications and public realm and transportation schemes. The Core Strategy DPD sets out a suite of Strategic objectives and Policies to which all development in the Borough should have regard.
- 8.2 A large share of the Borough's new growth and development will be focussed in the town centre. The area covered by this Plan will therefore have a significant impact on the Council's ambitions to move towards a reduced carbon society, address resource efficiency and adapt/mitigate any impacts of climate change including such issues as flood risk and protecting and enhancing biodiversity. There is an opportunity within this AAP to consider the possibility of 'tailoring' more detailed development management policies to address the specific opportunities and challenges in the Central Area if necessary.

### Option Box 17

**17a - Are the planning policies in the Core Strategy DPD, with the guidance in the Design and Townscape Guide SPD and Building Regulations sufficient to meet the challenge of climate change & bring about as significant reduction in carbon emissions?**

and / or

**17b - Should the borough wide Development Management DPD currently being prepared contain detailed development management policies for all development including the central area?**

or

**17c - Should there be a suite of policies in the submission version of this Plan relating to the particular challenges and opportunities presented by the regeneration and growth ambitions for the central area?**

- 8.3 The following planning considerations, in particular, are key factors and new developments should be designed to embrace the aims of sustainable development, without compromising the overall design quality.

## Addressing resource minimisation and carbon emissions

8.4 **Resource Minimisation:** new developments can make a significant contribution in this area both during construction and in their operation. Resource minimisation involves reducing the amount of energy used (and waste generated) and the efficient use of natural resources such as water and energy. The starting position should be that 'it is better to insulate than generate'.

- **Redevelopment or Refurbishment?:** as a general principle refurbishment and reuse of existing buildings usually requires significantly less energy than building new ones and therefore supports the aim of sustainable development, though not in all cases.
- **Site Layout and Orientation:** the site layout and orientation can play an important role in creating a more sustainable building. Other aspects of the site such as local microclimate, exposure, natural shading, atmospheric pollution, ground water levels and drainage need also to be assessed, ensuring that the site's maximum potential is realised.
- **Built form:** the actual built form and detailing of a new building should also play a significant role in promoting sustainable development and there should be a move towards carbon neutral buildings. Buildings can incorporate sustainable technologies such as natural ventilation and locally sourced and recycled materials. Developments built from high quality materials not only look better, but generally last longer and require less maintenance. It is important to ensure that both the internal and external layouts make the best use of the space available and avoid the creation of unusable and negative spaces.
- **Mix of Uses:** a mixed use scheme can be defined as a layering of uses within one building or a mix of uses in one development or neighbourhood. The benefits of mixed use development include:
  - Giving priority to employment generating uses such as retail, leisure accommodation and offices at lower levels.
  - Adding vibrancy and vitality to the streetscene and variety and interest to the townscape.
  - Reducing the need to travel to shops, workplaces and community facilities.
  - Creating mixed and balanced communities.
  - Greater community safety through increased natural surveillance throughout the day and night.
- **Flexibility:** it is essential that new buildings are able to adapt to the changing needs and trends of society otherwise they may become obsolete and impractical well within their lifespan. Flexible buildings allow the occupiers to personalise the buildings to suit their working and living requirements, and increase the variety of available uses.



- **Water Recycling and Sustainable Urban Drainage systems:** the Thames Gateway is a water stressed area where water is a scarce resource. In order to minimise the demand on water resources all new developments should be designed to be water efficient and to minimise water consumption and conversions and renovations should retrofit water efficient measures where possible. Current government policy requires developments to return as much storm water as possible to the ground or recycling system as close as possible to the source. Of particular importance locally is the need to consider off street run off into estuary

### Option Box 18

In order to address resource minimisation and carbon emissions:

**18a - The refurbishment option should be seriously considered particularly where the existing building makes a positive contribution to local character or where it can form the basic building block of a new development.**

or

**18b - Refurbishment should only be the first option in the case of listed buildings and or the wider historic environment**

and / or

**18c – The Plan should require the concept of ‘Passive House’ to be applied to all new residential development**

and/or

**18d - The Plan should express the need to significantly reduce carbon emissions in line with or above government and any locally agreed targets**

and

**18e - All new development and refurbishments should achieve water resource minimisation by systems that minimise water consumption.**

**18f – All new development and refurbishments should employ the principles of SUDS which provide an alternative approach to managing runoff from buildings and hard standings.**

- **Renewable Power Generation:** Core Strategy Policy KP2 requires that 10% of the total energy needs of all new development must be provided from renewable sources on site (and/or decentralised renewable and recycled energy sources). But not necessarily by wind generation.

- **Code for Sustainable Homes:** the recently announced government target is that all homes should be zero carbon from 2016.
- **Non-Residential Buildings:** as with residential development all new commercial development will be expected to contribute to the sustainability of the Borough by achieving BREEAM excellent

### Option Box 19

19 – The Plan should include policies that encourage the provision of more local energy generation and distribution systems either by:

19a - Allocating a site for a local energy generation building,

and /or

19b - Requiring all new development to make a contribution to the provision of local energy generation building and/or ensure that appropriate infrastructure is provided within new development to ensure future connectivity to such a system

and / or

19c - Encouraging the provision of combined heat and power systems and community heating as part of larger new development. If so what threshold size would be viable?

and / or

19d - Increasing the percentage of total energy needs of all new development to be provided on site from renewable sources, from 10%. If so what level should be expected?

- **Maximising Travel Choice:** all new developments should provide links to a range of transport networks and facilities so that the users have the widest possible travel options. This must include creating a safe and attractive environment for pedestrians and cyclists (including covered and secure cycle storage as part of any development) car parking and enhancing public transport links wherever possible
- **Travel to work** accounts for a significant amount of car journeys and therefore large commercial development proposals are required to produce a Travel Plan to demonstrate how the principles of sustainable development will be incorporated.

## Option Box 20

In order to maximise travel choice and encourage sustainable travel to work patterns:

20a - use the production of the Local Transport Plan 3 to develop an accessibility plan for the central area to deliver the Plan objectives for transport including the reduction of congestion and carbon emissions

and

20b – set vehicle parking standards in the central area to encourage sustainable modes of transport by restricting the provision of residential parking spaces provided and discouraging parking provision for workers in commercial development

or

20c - Provide adequate parking for all residents and visitors

and / or

20d – apply different vehicle parking standards in the character areas and gateway neighbourhoods

and / or

20e – ensure that space for, and the operation of, car clubs is an integral part of residential development Travel Plans

## Addressing biodiversity, green space provision and the green grid

8.5 It is a key principle of the spatial strategy in the Core Strategy DPD and the approach to regeneration and growth in the Central area that biodiversity interests (particularly within those of international importance in the estuary) and green space should be protected and enhanced where possible. Access to recreational areas and the benefits of the town's natural resources is of great importance to the quality of life of both the residents of the town centre and the borough as a whole. Growth and regeneration of the scale proposed in the central area could lead to undesirable levels of leisure activity on the seafront and the limited green areas to the detriment of the biodiversity interests.

8.6 Underpinning the Borough Council's approach to mitigating the impact of population growth and regeneration is the provision of new and enhanced public spaces with linked access through the green grid concept to provide alternative recreational opportunities and eliminate pressure on 'honey pot' areas such as the seafront. It also seeks to provide access for the town centre residents to new and improved quality parks and open spaces and to the more open countryside within and around the borough. This green grid should be clearly way marked and provide a focus for environmental enhancement and public realm improvements and public art strategy and could include carefully planned interpretation centres to encourage a greater understanding of the town's rich biodiversity/ New development should have regard to this strategy and make provision in its design to assist in its delivery.

### **Option Box 21**

**In order to address biodiversity, green space provision and the green grid in the Plan:**

**21a) - New development should recognise the ecological importance of wildlife features and open space as part of their design.**

**and**

**21b) - The Plan should identify areas for new public open space and 'pocket parks' to serve to local community within the character zones and gateway neighbourhoods together with a green grid strategy that links new and existing open space**

**and**

**21c) - The Plan should have particular regard to the sensitivities of the biodiversity interests of the estuary by:**

**21c (i) Promoting construction techniques and the timing of construction that is sensitive to the vulnerability of biodiversity interests on the seafront**

**and/or**

**21c (ii) Restrict all development south of the seawall**

**or**

**21c (iii) Provide clear criteria for any such development to mitigate its impact and enhance the biodiversity and recreational amenities in the estuary**

## Addressing Flood Risk

- 8.7 Planning Policy Statement 25 - Development and Flood Risk emphasises the need for flood risk to influence the location of development, and for development plans to follow a 'sequential test' in relation to the level of flood risk, directing development away from areas of risk of flooding. However, in assessing the weight to be attached to this consideration, the Borough Council, in preparing its Core Strategy DPD had regard to:
- Regeneration and growth imperatives within the existing built up the central seafront area,
  - The first SFRA completed for the Thames Gateway Area indicated that flood defences are mainly in good overall condition. A refresh of the SFRA for the Borough is currently underway and will inform the preferred strategy in this AAP
  - Southend has regularly and systematically improved existing flood defences to meet perceived levels of risk, which reduces the level of actual risk, indicated on current flood plain maps. This policy to maintain flood defences in line with the potential risk posed by climate change is set to continue and is supported by the Thames Estuary TE2100 plan and other Environment Agency flood management plans
- 8.8 The adopted Core Strategy DPD identifies the seafront as a key growth and regeneration area and in addressing flood risk the Core Strategy goes on to require that where the Environment Agency's Flood Zone Maps or other considerations, including up to date Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, indicate that a risk of flooding remain, all development proposals shall be accompanied by a detailed flood risk assessment appropriate to the scale and nature of the development and the risk. As such development will only be permitted where the assessment clearly demonstrates that it is appropriate in terms of type, siting and mitigation measures proposed, using sustainable flood risk management options which safeguard biodiversity importance of the foreshore and / or effective sustainable drainage measures.
- 8.9 The Borough Council has commissioned a refresh of the Thames Gateway Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for the Borough and a Water Cycle Study. In addition the Council is preparing a Southend Shoreline Strategy. These will further inform its approach to flood risk across the borough In future Development Plan Documents.
- 8.10 It is considered therefore that the Core Strategy DPD and the suggested approach to sustainable development will provide sufficient policy guidance at this stage with regard to flood risk. Any findings of the above studies and emerging strategies will be incorporated if and where they are relevant to the Southend Central Area Action Plan

## Option Box 22

**Do you agree that the Core Strategy DPD provides sufficient policy guidance at this stage with regard to flood risk?**

## Addressing housing growth and need

### Total Provision

- 8.11 The Central Area Master Plan identifies a capacity within its boundary of 3,160 net additional dwellings. The initial findings of the SHLAA identifies a capacity for approximately 4,000 net additional dwellings within the central areas (i.e. including approx the Neighbourhood Gateway Areas).
- 8.12 Both these figures are based on high-density flatted development, which has been the trend in the town to date. Whilst there is still a role for this sort of development in regeneration there is increasing concern about the quality and size of dwelling provision in the town. Any policy move to increase the size of future dwellings and/or to provide family housing instead of flats would impact on density levels and therefore potential total capacity.
- 8.13 In addition to the identified 'gateway neighbourhoods' where a planned approach to regeneration and change is being promoted in this Plan, there are other significant areas of housing to the east and west of the High Street that may be in need of regeneration and their connectivity to the town centre improved. These areas include Whitegate Road, Quebec House, York Road etc to the east and Gordon Road /Napier Road area to the west.

### Option Box 23

In order to deliver the number of homes the community requires in the Central Area the Plan should base its development strategy on:

23a – delivering the scale of dwelling units suggested by past density levels (i.e. the market)

or

23b - reflect a review of densities based on what is appropriate in the different Quarters and neighbourhood gateways. i.e encourage larger family houses in the Neighbourhood Gateways and higher density 'condominium' apartments in the town centre.

and

23c) - What approaches should be considered to address specific issues facing other existing residential areas in the Plan particularly to the east of the High Street?

### Type of homes – quality and size

8.14 Whilst the Borough has performed well in terms over overall housing delivery the average split over the last few years between houses and flats has been 25% / 75% respectively. In terms of size of dwellings - completions to date are split as follows 26% one bedroom; 52% two bedroom; 14% 3 bedrooms; and 8% four bedroom or more. Despite a large proportion of the units having 2 bedrooms plus, it is apparent that living space (including circulation space and storage facilities) may not be sufficient to meet family needs. The AAP should therefore consider how it tailors its approach to housing delivery to meet housing needs highlighted in the TGSE Strategic Housing Market Assessment (update 2010) and reflect the Borough Council's priorities as set out in its Housing Strategy.

## Option Box 24

In order to deliver the type of homes the community requires in the Central Area the Plan should:

24a - rely on the Development Management policies relating to size and type of housing that will be set out in the Development Management DPD and apply across the Borough.

or

24b - Set out specific standards for different types of dwellings with minimum room sizes and requirements for storage to meet the particular objectives for the area.

and / or

24c - There should be a different approach to the size and type of dwelling between the town centre and Gateway Neighbourhoods i.e. larger units and or family homes focussed in the Gateway Neighbourhoods with apartments primarily in the town centre.

## Affordable Housing

8.15 The Core Strategy Policy CP8 'Dwelling Provision' sets the strategic policy with regard to affordable housing provision in the borough. It requires 30% of all development to be affordable housing on sites of 50 units or more or 2 hectares or more and 20% on sites of 10 – 49 units or 0.3 hectares or more. Smaller sites will be required to make a financial contribution to fund off-site provision of affordable housing.

8.16 Since 2001 the provision of affordable dwellings in the Borough has been consistently low both in terms of meeting housing needs and the regional targets. The Central Area has a key role to play in delivering the residual growth set out in the Core Strategy and therefore will be critical to the provision of future affordable housing.



### Option Box 25

In order to provide for future affordable housing needs the Plan should;

25a - promote a higher percentage of affordable housing and reduce the threshold size to which it should apply within the AAP area e.g. 35% on all sites above 15 units.

or

25b - consider focussing the provision of affordable housing in the Neighbourhood Gateways by requiring higher level of provision in these areas whilst at the same time reducing the requirement to form affordable housing in the town centre.

or

25c - set an overall numerical target for affordable homes to be accommodated in the plan area and this should be proportioned between the different development areas according to their role and function.

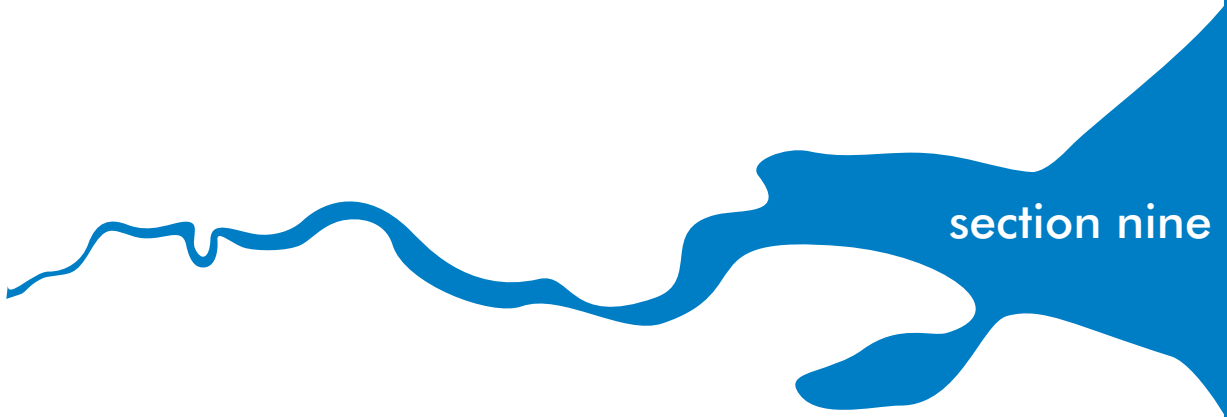
### Securing additional services and facilities required as a result of housing growth

8.17 Housing growth will lead to a significant increase in population, resulting in greater demand for local services and community facilities. Where these are located is a key issue since it effects how and when they are secured and the final cost and who benefits most directly.

### Option Box 26

Where should new services and facilities be located? Please indicate a preferred location i.e. Quarter or neighbourhood for each service or facility. Are there any more that should be considered?

Type	Please indicate preferred location
Specialist housing – e.g. for the elderly	
Student accommodation	
Primary and secondary schools	
Pre-school and nursery facilities	
Open space/public parks	
Child and youth play facilities	
Health Centres	
Any other ideas	



section nine

## 9. Delivery and Monitoring

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### Issues & Options for an Implementation Plan for Delivery

- 9.1 It is intended that the final version of the AAP will include detailed information about deliverability and the arrangements for monitoring the success of the plan. The main delivery body will be Renaissance Southend Limited which was incorporated as a private limited company in March 2005. Its objectives are to assist, promote, encourage, develop and secure the regeneration in the social, physical and economic environment of Southend-on-Sea. The company is managed by a private and public sector Board of Director who's Founder Members are Southend-on-Sea Borough Council, East of England Development Agency, English Partnerships [now part of the Homes and Communities Agency], University of Essex and South Essex College, supported by the Department for Communities and Local Government, Government Office for the East of England,, the Housing Corporation [which is also now part of the Homes and Communities Agency] and the Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership.
- 9.2 The Core Strategy DPD sets a challenging target for Central Southend in helping to meet the Borough's ambition for economic growth and meeting housing needs. Evidence suggests that performance over the last ten years in the delivery of new homes and commercial floorspace within Central Southend has been poor. This is a reflection of the way in which values for both housing and commercial space, especially offices, are impacted by the low value of existing stock, thus deterring further developer investment.
- 9.3 Efforts to improve the attractiveness of Central Southend are being made through substantial investment of some £25m in public realm and infrastructure. There is some evidence that this, together with £100m investment in Higher and Further Education provision in the town centre, is starting to have an impact with the recent refurbishment of the Palace Hotel, investment by retailers; Marks & Spencer, Hennes and Next, and the refurbishment of the Victoria Shopping Centre. Further work to review the demand and capacity for additional retail space in Central Southend over the next 5-10 years is currently underway which will to inform the detailed proposals in the subsequent submission version of this Plan. At present there is little evidence of developer confidence in either the office market or higher density town centre private housing.
- 9.4 Land availability in the town centre is heavily constrained, but some major development sites will need to be identified to deliver the quantum of floorspace and homes needed to meet the Core Strategy ambitions. It will also be necessary for this Plan to do more than simply allocate land uses to particular sites. History suggests that values will not be sufficient for the market to be able to drive significant land acquisition costs, with the high level of risk and uncertainty this involves.

- 9.5 There are three potential options for delivery in the town centre, given the public sector is a significant land owner, and these can be applied both to the overall strategy and individual sites. Ultimately there could be a combination of delivery options used:
1. Market forces dictate delivery in terms of future development:
    - involves maximum risk for private sector, low risk for public sector overall high risk that market led development will not deliver wider regeneration benefits and ‘cherry picking’ may be counter productive for longer term sustainability of Central Southend
  2. Public/Sector Partnership through Development Agreements, Joint Venture Partnerships or Local Asset Backed Vehicles (LABVs)
    - the Council and private sector partner(s) share risk in short term and share in any longer term benefits
    - increases potential for delivery and achievement of wider regeneration benefits
  3. Public Sector led, with the local authority as principal land owner taking lead to ‘derisk’ individual sites and procure developments on a site by site basis.
    - involves maximise risk to public sector
    - may secure re-development but may lose opportunity for wider or longer term benefits

### Option Box 27

**27a - Market forces dictate delivery in terms of future development**

**27b - Public/Sector Partnership through Development Agreements, Joint Venture Partnerships or Local Asset Backed Vehicles (LABVs)**

**27c - Public Sector led, with the local authority as principal land owner taking lead to ‘derisk’ individual sites and procure developments on a site by site basis.**

- 9.6 Notwithstanding the mechanisms to be employed to secure development it will be essential for the Plan to give clear guidance on the key principles for any redevelopment proposals, namely:
- Town Centre Parking Strategy  
Replacement of existing car parking on a like for like basis, in new MSCPs will need to be tested and validated and its impact on costs considered as part of the overall viability appraisals

- Affordable Housing  
Are the Core Strategy Policies for the provision of affordable housing wholly achievable on the key town centre sites. What are the implications and possible alternatives for meeting the identified need for additional affordable housing in other parts of the central area.
- Education Contributions, public realm and other s106 obligations  
How will the Council's expectations be met on schemes where viability is affected by wider regeneration requirements to include commercial or mixed uses

9.7 Where there remains a gap on viability for schemes that are deemed significant in achieving the overall economic growth identified in the Core Strategy it will be important to ensure that this Plan relates closely to the emerging Local Investment Plan to be prepared jointly with the Homes & Communities Agency, the Government's delivery agency for housing and regeneration in the Thames Gateway.

9.8 For the purposes of the Implementation Plan the key sites identified in the CAM, which will require detailed consideration, will be:

1. St John's Heygate – including Tylers and Seaway Car Parks, the seafront east of Pier Hill, including Marine Plaza site (former Dizzyland) and Esplanade House
2. Warrior Square – Land between Warrior Square Garden and Whitegate Road
3. Queensway House & Southchurch Road
4. Victoria Avenue East – Civic Quarter
5. Victoria Avenue West – Existing Office Quarter
6. London Road North – Sainsbury (subject to move to Roots Hall)
7. Clifftown – Alexandra St and Clarence Road Car Parks

9.9 Demonstrating that these sites can be brought forward for a combination of mixed commercial and residential uses in accordance with an orderly phasing plan that avoids over supply at any one time will be critical to the Plan assisting the delivery of the Core Strategy DPD.

## Monitoring

9.10 It is expected that the Annual Monitoring Report will be the main vehicle for monitoring the success of the plan, but we would also welcome views on other options for recording and reporting on implementation.